

5-2012

Visual Thinking: Sketching my Future as a Visual Practitioner

Melinda Walker
melinda_Walker@hotmail.com

Advisor

Dr. Sue Keller Mathers

First Reader

Dr. Sue Keller Mathers

To learn more about the International Center for Studies in Creativity and its educational programs, research, and resources, go to <http://creativity.buffalostate.edu/>.

Recommended Citation

Walker, Melinda, "Visual Thinking: Sketching my Future as a Visual Practitioner" (2012). *Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's Projects*. Paper 156.

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects>



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Running Head: VISUAL THINKING: SKETCHING FUTURE

Buffalo State
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

*Visual Thinking:
Sketching my Future as a Visual Practitioner*

A Project in
Creative Studies

By

Melinda L. Walker

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2012

Buffalo State
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

*Visual Thinking:
Sketching my Future as a Visual Practitioner*

A Project in
Creative Studies

By

Melinda L. Walker

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2012

Dates Approved:

May 12, 2012

May 12, 2012

Susan Keller-Mathers

Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers
Associate Professor

Melinda L. Walker

Melinda L. Walker
Student

**Visual Thinking:
Sketching my Future as a Visual Practitioner**

By

Melinda L. Walker

An Abstract of a Project
In
Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements
For the Degree of


Master of Science

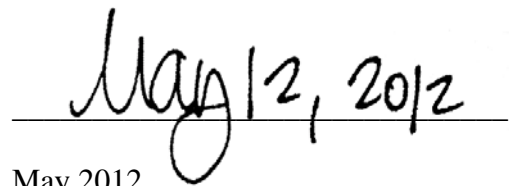
May 2012

Buffalo State
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

PROJECT ABSTRACT*Visual Thinking: Sketching my Future as a Visual Practitioner*

John Berger states in his classic book, *Ways of Seeing* (1972), “We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice...We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves.” (p. 8-9) This project looks at the field of visual thinking and the relations to creativity. Extensive practice of the visual and graphic synthesis of information is a key component of this exploration. When appropriate, graphic visuals are used throughout this paper to further emphasize and illustrate the impact of visuals in comprehension and communication. Various references are explored in relation to visual thinking and creativity, drawing from practicing professionals to scholarly theory. By looking deeply into this field, a clearer image of my current strengths, applicable past experiences, and future plan of action is expected to emerge.



Melinda L. Walker

May 2012

Acknowledgements

To all the wonderful ICSC Faculty I have had the opportunity to work with during my time here: Dr. Sue Keller-Mathers, Dr. Cyndi Burnett, Dr. Gerard Puccio, Dr. John Cabra, Russ Schoen, Dr. Roger Firestein, and Dr. Jeffrey Zacko-Smith, as well as my wonderful Supreme cohort members, with whom I totally enjoyed working and hope to continue to do so in the future – thank you!

Table of Contents

Section 1: Project Purpose and Description.....	11
Section 2: Pertinent Literature.....	17
Section 3: Process Plan.....	34
Section 4: Outcomes.....	40
Section 5: Key Learnings.....	85
Section 6: Conclusions.....	95
Section 7: Appendix.....	107

List of Figures

Figure 1. Graphic Summary of Project.....	11
Figure 2. Commonly Used Names for Work Produced by Visual Practitioners.....	12
Figure 3. Visual Thinking and Creativity.....	14
Figure 4. Words and Images.....	15
Figure 5. Visual Thinking Resources.....	17
Figure 6. Arnheim's <i>Visual Thinking</i> Book.....	18
Figure 7. Website about Metaphors.....	19
Figure 8. Lloyd Dangle's Website.....	20
Figure 9. <i>That Creative Space</i> Website.....	21
Figure 10. Graphic Facilitation Blog.....	22
Figure 11. Personal Reactions to <i>The Accidental Creative</i>	23
Figure 12. <i>The Accidental Creative</i> Summary.....	24
Figure 13. <i>The Accidental Creative</i> Research Connections.....	24
Figure 14. International Forum of Visual Practitioners Website.....	25
Figure 15. Lynn Kearny's Website.....	26
Figure 16. <i>So You Want to be a Graphic Facilitator?</i>	27
Figure 17. <i>Creative Leadership: Skills That Drive Change</i>	28
Figure 18. David Sibbet's Website.....	29
Figure 19. Anticipated Project Timeline.....	36
Figure 20. Sketchnotes from TCS Modules 1-9 Community Mentorship Calls.....	41
Figure 21. Self Care.....	43
Figure 22. Self Care Cards.....	44

Figure 23. Visual Brainstorm of my Strengths.....	45
Figure 24. My Unique Selling Points as a Visual Practitioner.....	46
Figure 25. Artistic Influences on my Style.....	47
Figure 26. ICSC Timeline.....	48
Figure 27. Second ICSC Timeline.....	49
Figure 28. Ekvall's Creative Climate Dimensions Treasure Map.....	50
Figure 29. Creative Problem Solving Gameboard.....	52
Figure 30. Garden Metaphor.....	54
Figure 31. Castle Metaphor.....	55
Figure 32. Additions to Castle Metaphor.....	56
Figure 33. House Metaphor.....	57
Figure 34. Rapid Ideation for a Manicurist and Accountant Business Combination.....	58
Figure 35. Rapid Random Word Drawings.....	60
Figure 36. Second Rapid Ideation Deliverable.....	61
Figure 37. Synthesis Image of Modules 1-8 of TCS.....	62
Figure 38. Agenda Design.....	63
Figure 39. Gumdrops Activity.....	64
Figure 40. Gumdrops Guide.....	64
Figure 41. Synthesis Image for Feedback from Last Semester.....	65
Figure 42. Evaluation Form Based on Sue Besemer's Creative Product Analysis.....	68
Figure 43. Workplace Environment Evaluation.....	70
Figure 44. Five Images Sent to Supreme Cohort Members for Feedback.....	71
Figure 45. Sketchnotes of Skype Calls with my SBP and Advisor.....	73

Figure 46. Classroom Environment Evaluation.....	74
Figure 47. Workplace Environment Evaluation	75
Figure 48. Workplace Environment Evaluation Discussion.....	75
Figure 49. Book Evaluation Matrix for Elementary Children.....	76
Figure 50. Book Evaluation Matrix Used by a Student.....	76
Figure 51. Choices: Convergent Thinking Rules.....	77
Figure 52. Ideas: Divergent Thinking Rules.....	77
Figure 53. Ideas Rules Poster in the Classroom.....	78
Figure 54. Laminated Ideas Poster.....	78
Figure 55. Idea Box Template.....	79
Figure 56. Story Plots Idea Box.....	79
Figure 57. SCAMPER Template One.....	80
Figure 58. SCAMPER Template Two.....	81
Figure 59. SCAMPER Example One.....	81
Figure 60. SCAMPER Example Two.....	81
Figure 61. My Stickydoodle Book of Ideas.....	82
Figure 62. Stickydoodle Book: Skills.....	83
Figure 63. Stickydoodle Book: Business.....	83
Figure 64. Stickydoodle Book: Actions Taken.....	83
Figure 65. Stickydoodle Book Two: Super Sticky Stuff.....	86
Figure 66. Super Sticky Stuff.....	86
Figure 67. Sleep Dashboard.....	87
Figure 68. Daily Stretch Dashboard.....	87

Figure 69. Visualize Dashboard.....	88
Figure 70. Twitter Dashboard.....	89
Figure 71. My Discovery of Visual Thinking.....	92
Figure 72. Anticipated vs. Actual Outcomes.....	96
Figure 73. Rotated Squiggly Lines.....	97
Figure 74. Combined Squiggly Lines.....	99
Figure 75. Squiggly Lines Made from Straight Lines.....	101
Figure 76. Next Steps.....	102
Figure 77. Six Slides to Visually Inspire Movement Despite Ambiguity.....	104

SECTION ONE: PROJECT PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this project is to broaden and deepen my preliminary exploration of the development of graphic recording, facilitation, and illustration skills. Exploring ways to develop skill and knowledge relevant to becoming a professional visual practitioner will be a focus. Figure 1 is an example of a graphic summary of this project.

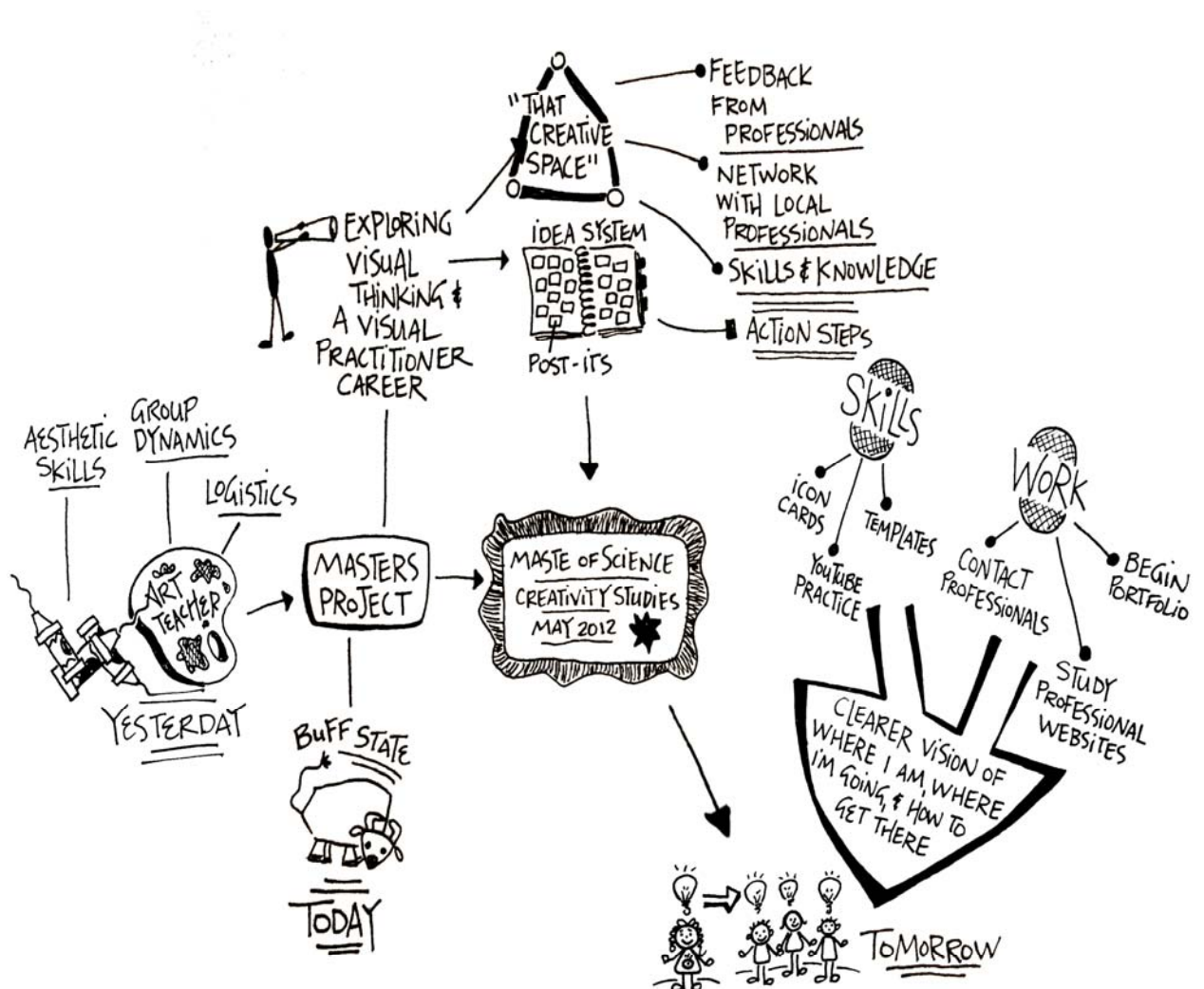


Figure 1. Graphic Summary of Project.

A visual practitioner is one employed in any or all of the following skills as defined: Graphic recording is the act of graphically capturing the essence of a meeting in real-time; Graphic facilitation is the act of facilitating a meeting while graphically capturing the essence, often through the use of templates; Graphic illustration involves graphically capturing the essence of a body of information, whether written or verbal, after the fact. All of these roles are grounded in visual thinking, which is simply the act of thinking in pictures, including those seen in the mind's eye. Figure 2 shows common words used to describe the work of visual practitioners, with the root words enlarged to make the common themes more readily apparent.

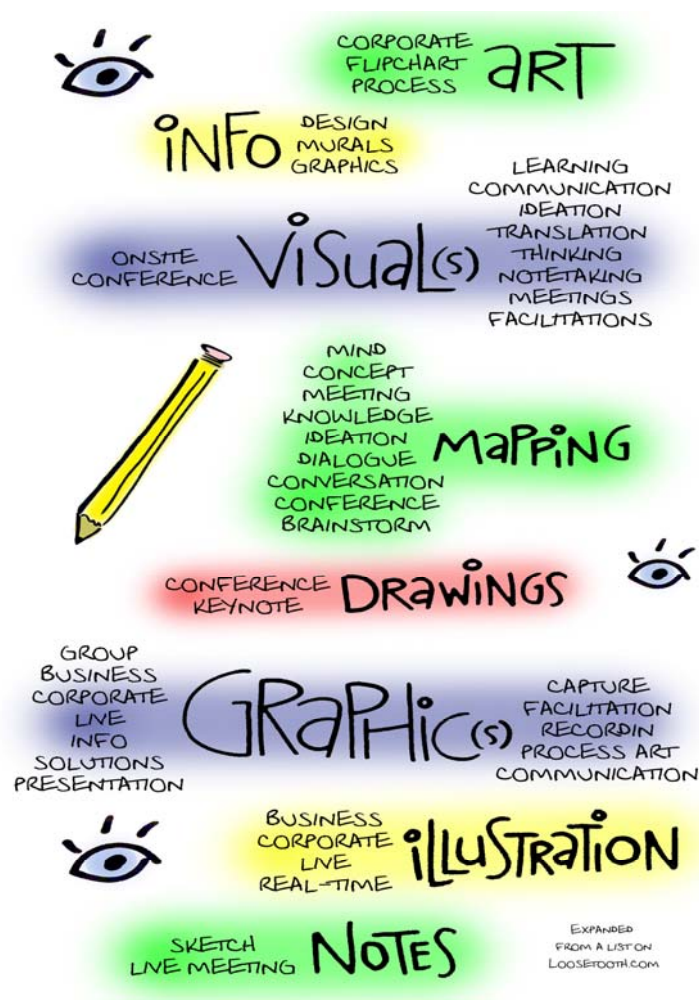


Figure 2. Commonly Used Names for Work Produced by Visual Practitioners.

I currently favor graphic illustration, possibly because it is closer to my comfort zone. Through completion of this project, I aim to learn and experience more about graphic facilitation and recording, strengthen my graphic illustration skills, and discover where my strengths and preferences really lie. As a result, I will have a clearer vision of my future as a visual practitioner, creativity expert, and creatively contagious person. Ultimately, I would like to apply these skills to my original goal when entering this program: To make learning fun for kids. Nearing the completion of this program, I now realize it is more accurate to expand my reach to kids of all ages.

Rationale for Selection

Centuries ago, Aristotle referred to images, not words, as the building blocks of thoughts, insights, and ultimately new ideas (Khatena, 1984). Graphic, visual language transcends time, culture, and language barriers and has been used for centuries to form, as well as communicate, such new found knowledge, insights and ideas (Khatena, 1984). Thanks to our increasingly global and technologically driven world, visuals are thought to be the primary means of communication in the future. Visuals are also the primary language of the brain and have the ability to make abstract information concrete, and thus more readily absorbable and memorable (Khatena, 1984). In fact, Meier (2000) states that people who learned technical information through imagery had 26% better long-term recall than those who did not use imagery. In another study, insurance claim adjusters who used imagery to learn a new insurance claim processing procedure scored 400% higher than those who had not used imagery (Meier, 2000).

Torrance (1999) considered rich, colorful, and exciting imagery to be foundational to all creativity. Figure 3 illustrates the connections between visual thinking and creativity,

including the work of Torrance and components of Creative Problem Solving, while

Figure 4 synthesizes the differences between words and images.

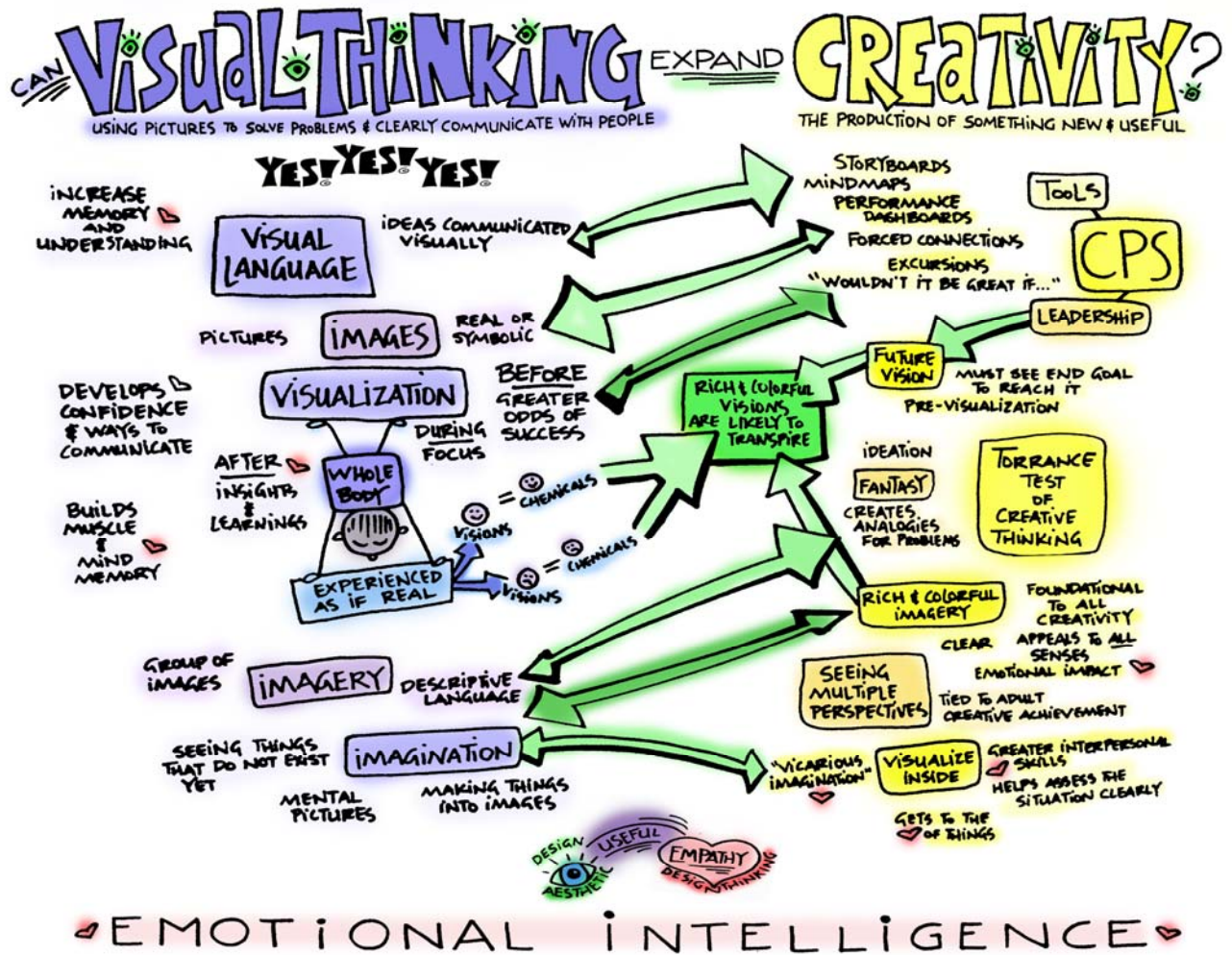


Figure 3. Visual Thinking and Creativity.

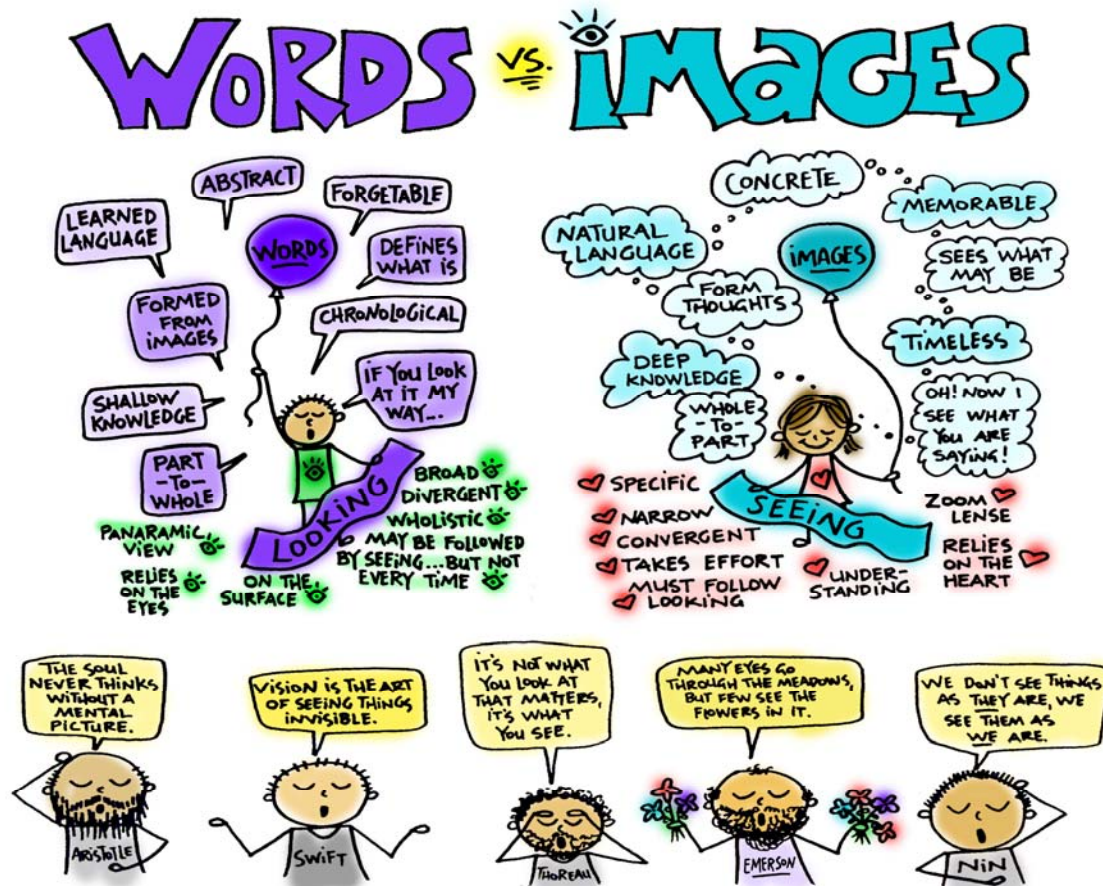


Figure 4. Words and Images.

Although visual practitioners have been around for decades, the demand is growing. However, the field is still somewhat in its infancy and the industry is yet to be represented in statistical employment information. Knowledge of the growing demand for visual practitioners comes directly from those currently employed in the field. These professionals profess the demand for visual practitioners strongly outweighs the number of those qualified to meet them (Durand & Durand, 2011). Therefore, skilled practitioners have plenty of options regarding the types of work they choose to take on and the people they work with, and I find this variety and flexibility as appealing as the work itself.

My background in art and love for design form a solid foundation for the visual aspects of this work, while my experience in education applies directly to the logistics and dynamics of group experiences. This leads me to believe there is a high probability I could make a decent income as a visual practitioner. I live in a hot-spot of innovation that is more likely to desire this type of work than more traditional areas, potentially allowing for greater networking and volunteer opportunities to get me started. Also, proficiency as a visual practitioner could serve as a natural segue to teaching or training creativity if I desire and a means to stay deeply connected with those in the field of creativity beyond this program.

Annotated Bibliography

A deeper look into a handful of literature that informed my thinking follows. Once again, this information is presented both verbally and visually. This time, however, different information is presented in each modality in order to give a more comprehensive picture of the ways in which each resource has and will continue to enrich my thinking.

Arnheim, R. (1969). *Visual thinking*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

A pioneer in the field, Arnheim raised awareness of visual thinking well over 40 years ago with the publication of this landmark book. Spanning Plato to computers, Arnheim provides practical tips to enhance the effectiveness of imagery, as well as research supporting the role of visuals in our thinking. When faced with skeptical questions or comments about the value of visual practitioners, I will no doubt turn to this book for smart, scholarly answers that move beyond the sheer aesthetic of images to their effects on our perception and thinking processes. See Figure 6.

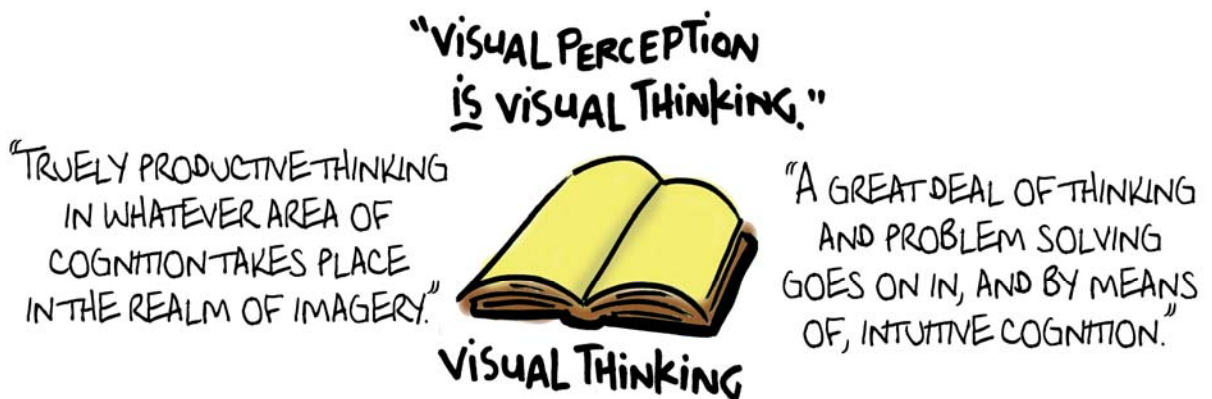


Figure 6. Arnheim's *Visual Thinking* Book.

Casnig, J. D. (1997-2009) *A language of metaphors*. Kingston, Ontario, Canada:

Knowgramming.com

One of the TCS modules involves the use of visual metaphors to communicate ideas and solve problems, especially in business settings. This site provides numerous lists, links, and explanations about metaphors, all ripe for inspiration. Metaphors are used so frequently in our speech and, more often than not, are highly visual and the types of things I would draw when recording conversations. I figure the more I know about metaphors the better, so I can develop a library of visual metaphors to ensure I am prepared for a variety of topics and situations. See Figure 7.

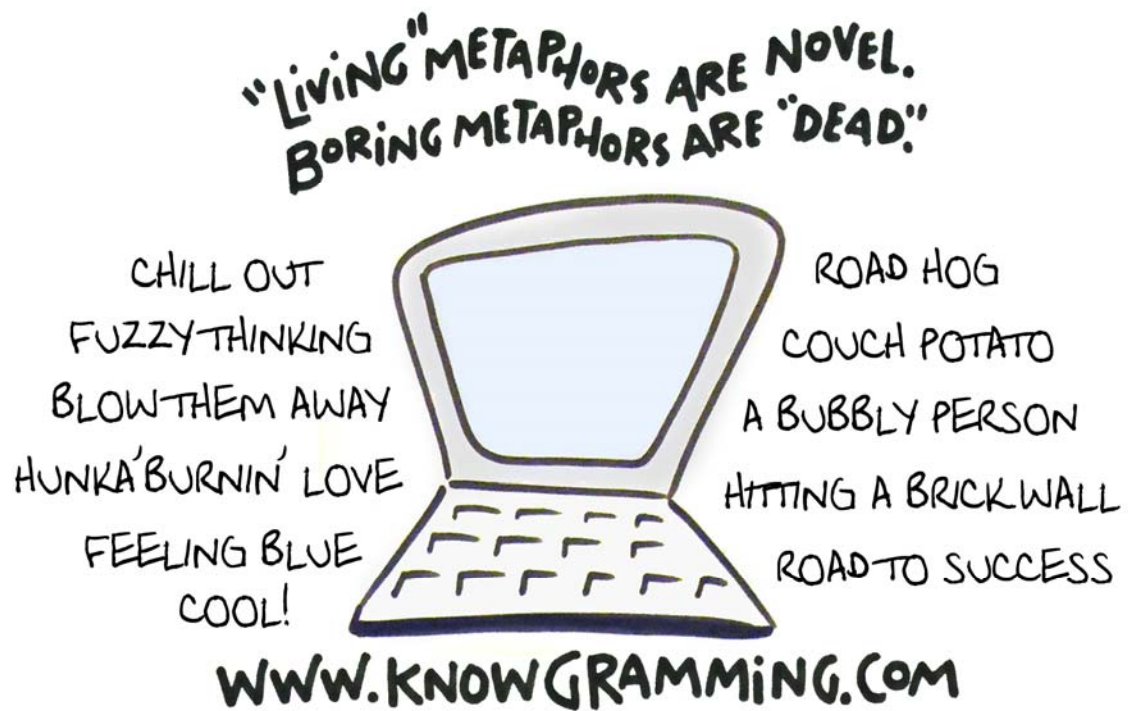


Figure 7. Website about Metaphors.

Dangle, L. (2011). Lloydangle.com

Lloyd is the guy responsible for the distinctive graphics used for the American cold remedy, Airborne. His work has appeared in numerous magazines (Cosmopolitan, Time, Shape, Wired, etc.), newspapers (San Francisco Chronicle, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, etc.), book publishers (Avalon Books, Doubleday Mainstreet Books, etc.), and in the corporate world (Federal Express, SB Johnson, etc.). He was also one of the first assigned to graphically record the Republican National Convention, with the results published in The Best American Comics. He is a scheduled workshop leader at IFVP this year and a fellow classmate in TCS. I like the way he calls himself a cartoonist, yet does all types of graphic work, as well as some writing and teaching. I also like his website layout and will no doubt return to it when I am ready for my own. See Figure 8.

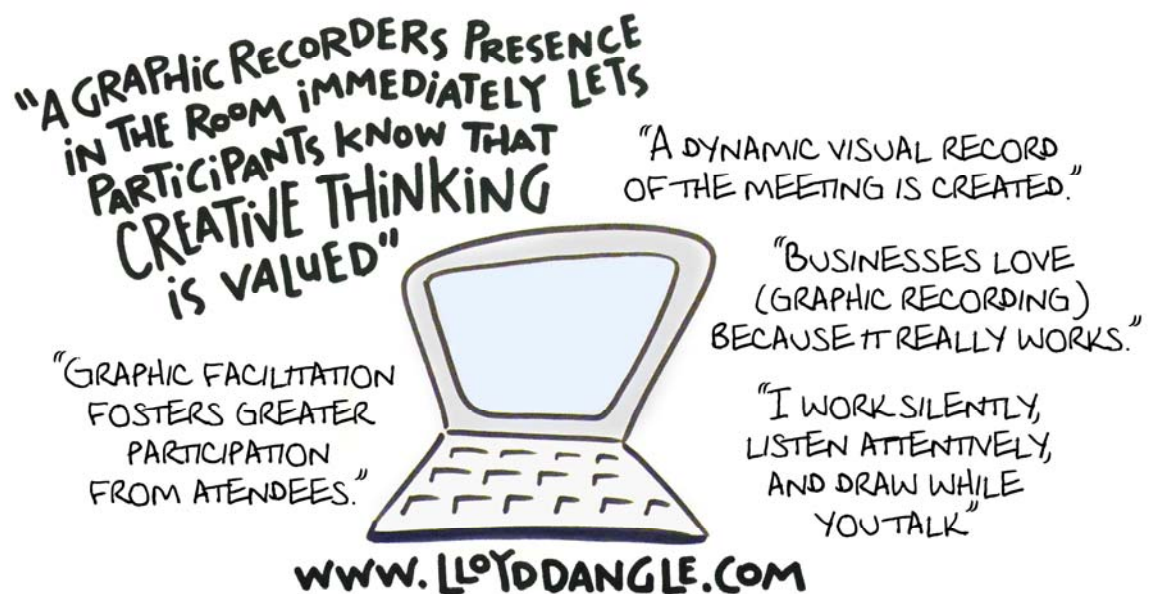


Figure 8. Lloyd Dangle's Website.

Durand, D. & Durand, P. (2011). *That Creative Space*. <http://Thatcreativespace.com>

Diane and Peter Durand are both active visual practitioners who have been in the business for over two decades and are currently developing the online course, ThatCreativeSpace.com (TCS). This course dives into personal, skills, and business development. Topics covered include defining your personal style, various techniques of recording and presenting information, articulating the value of hiring a visual practitioner, and developing your market niche. Supervision, feedback, and mentoring are provided by the Durands throughout the duration of the class. TCS and the Durands are my primary resources for this project and will continue to be through completion of the additional three modules beyond the scope of this project.

See Figure 9.

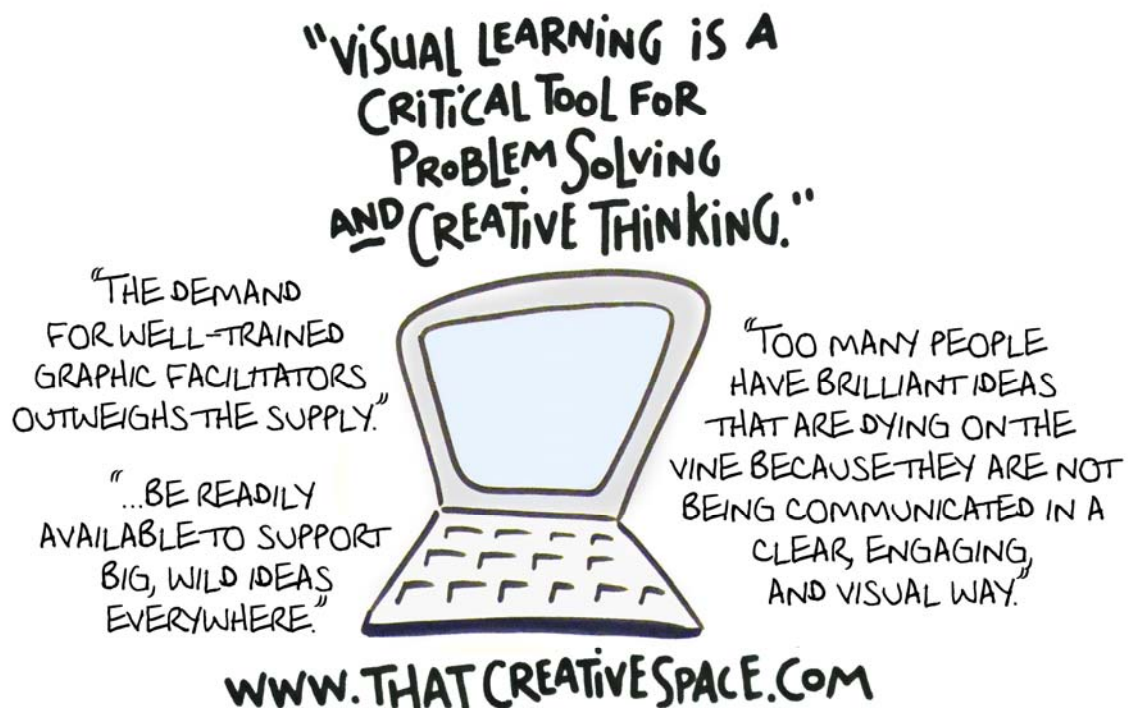


Figure 9. *That Creative Space* Website.

Durand, P., Ed. (2012). *The center for graphic facilitation: Ideas, methods, & tools for visual learners*. <http://graphicfacilitation.blogs.com/pages/>

This is the blog for The Center for Graphic Facilitation and is edited by the very same Peter Durand of That Creative Space. Links to practicing graphic facilitators and their locations, quick tips and tricks, links to upcoming networking and training opportunities, and pretty much everything else related to graphic facilitation is included on this blog. Definitely a place to keep informed and connected to the profession and people involved with it. See Figure 10.

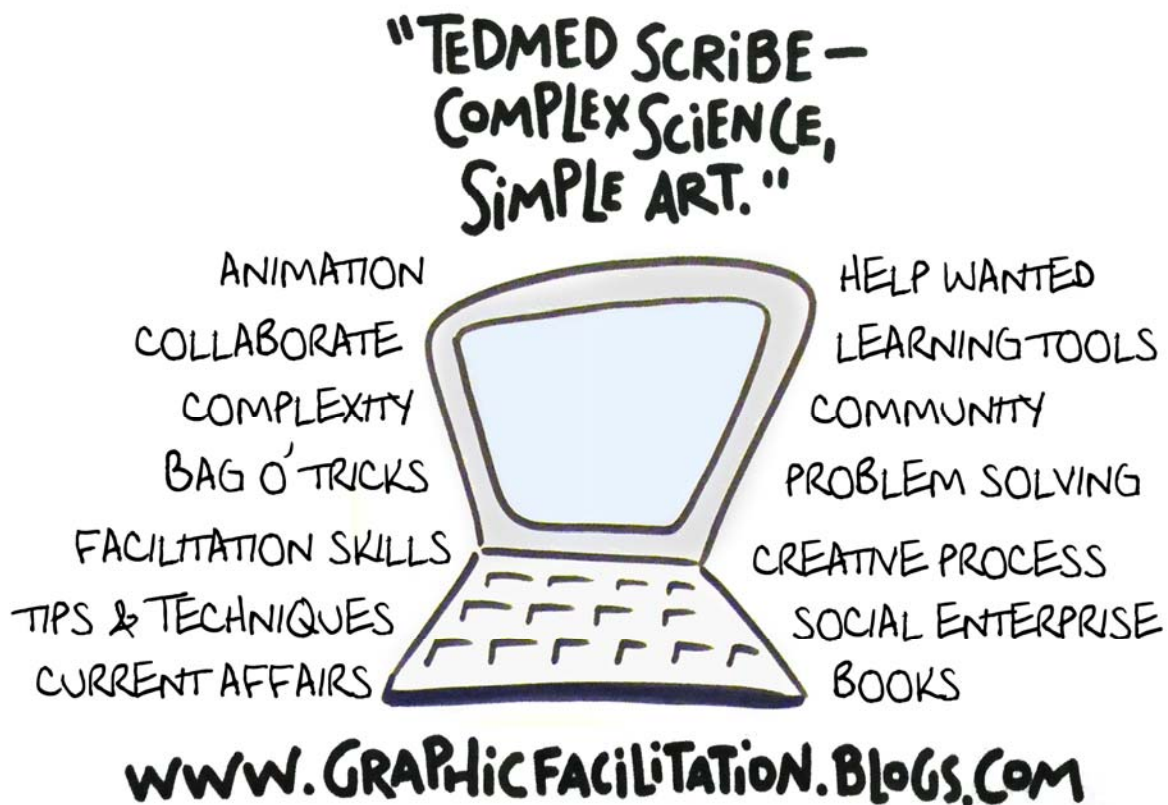


Figure 10. Graphic Facilitation Blog.

I discovered Todd Henry's blog (theaccidentalcreative.com) years back and was hooked, so I was eager to read his book as soon as it was published last year. A graphic summary is shown in Figure 11, links to current creativity research are graphically represented in Figure 12, and my personal reactions after reading it are graphically recorded in Figure 13. Full page versions can be found in Appendix B.

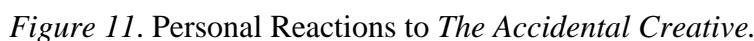




Figure 12. *The Accidental Creative Summary.*



Figure 13. *The Accidental Creative Research Connections.*

International Forum of Visual Practitioners: The online home for visual thinkers, graphic recorders, and facilitators. (2012). <http://ifvpcommunity.ning.com/>

The International Forum of Visual Practitioners (IFVP) is a community of professionals active and engaged in the field of visual thinking. Workshops by prominent experts in the field are a key feature of the annual IFVP conference, and the event is ripe for networking. Due to financial reasons, it seems unlikely I will be able to attend the conference this year, however this is definitely a group to get involved with in whatever capacity I can and an event to attend whenever possible.

See Figure 14.



Figure 14. International Forum of Visual Practitioners Website.

Kearny, L. (2000-2007). <http://lynnkearny.com>

Lynn Kearny is another accomplished TCS classmate. I have learned much from her comments on the community mentorship calls, as well as the work she has posted and her comments about it. She has written several books about organizations and graphic presentations (including *Graphics for Presenters* featured in my bibliography below) and is also a founding member of IFVP. She lives fairly close by, so I am hopeful we can meet in person at some point. See Figure 15.

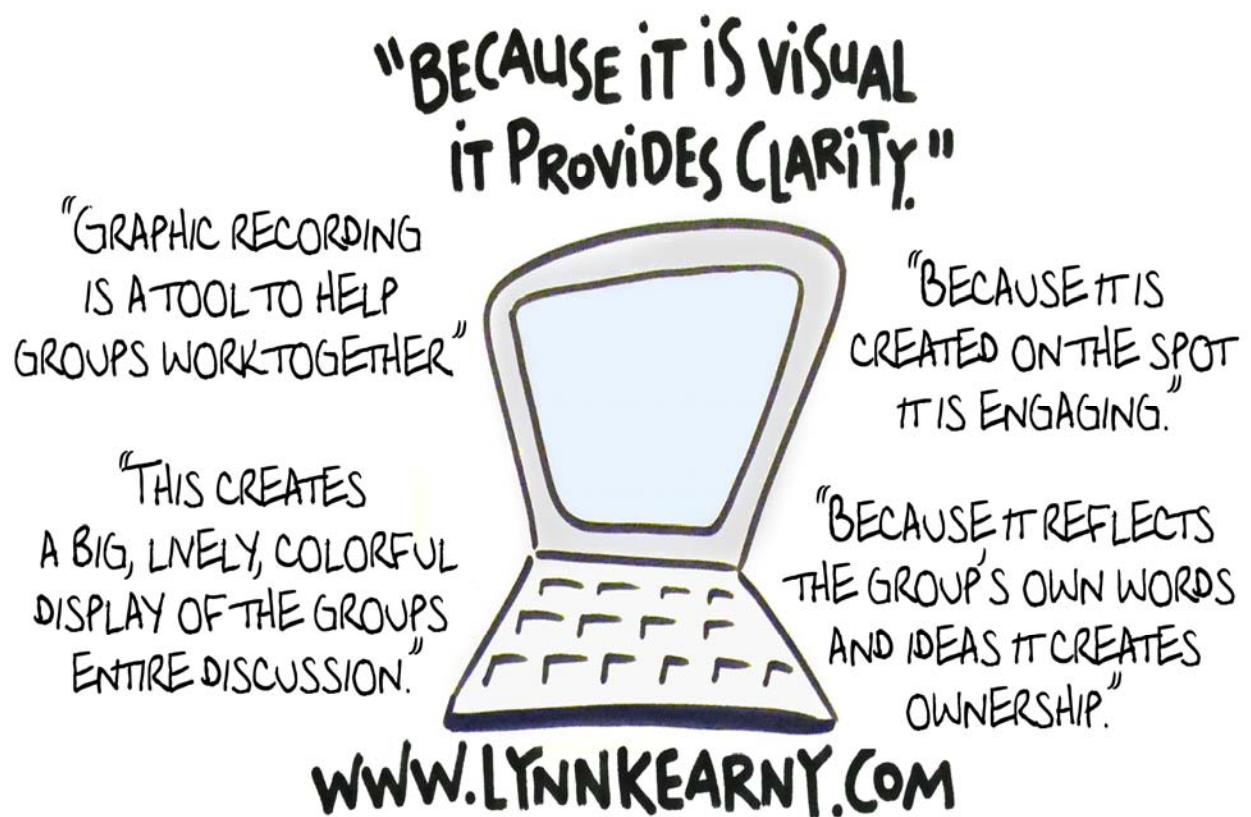


Figure 15. Lynn Kearny's Website.

Merkley, C. L. (n.d.). *So you want to be a graphic recorder/facilitator?*. Make your mark graphic facilitation: Using the power of visual thinking to move groups and individuals forward. http://www.makemark.com/articles/so_you_want_to_be_a_graphic_recorder_facilitator

This blog article offers comprehensive yet concise descriptions and explanations of the most commonly asked questions about graphic facilitation and recording. These are questions potential clients are likely to have, so it is very helpful to see how a professional explains the profession and benefits of her service. This article also offers advice for those looking to get into the field. After reading about the types of work situations, necessary skills, and salary information, I realized this may be the ideal career for me and something I needed to investigate further. See Figure 16.



Figure 16. *So You Want to be a Graphic Facilitator?*

Puccio, G. J., Mance, M. , & Murdock, M. C. (2010). *Creative leadership: Skills that drive change* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc.

I have come to appreciate this book more and more every time I look at it. The link between creativity and leadership is profound, yet so often overlooked. I did not realize how heavily many of the CPS tools, and even the CPS process itself, rely on visual thinking, including that in our mind's eye. And interestingly enough, I find it increasingly difficult to look at this book without seeing myself in Buffalo, either walking through the steps in class with ICSC professors, or working through them on my own in my dark little dorm room. Either way, it is a powerful reminder of the role visuals, including those in our mind's eye, play in making abstract concepts concrete and memorable, as well as the role of group experiences. See Figure 17.

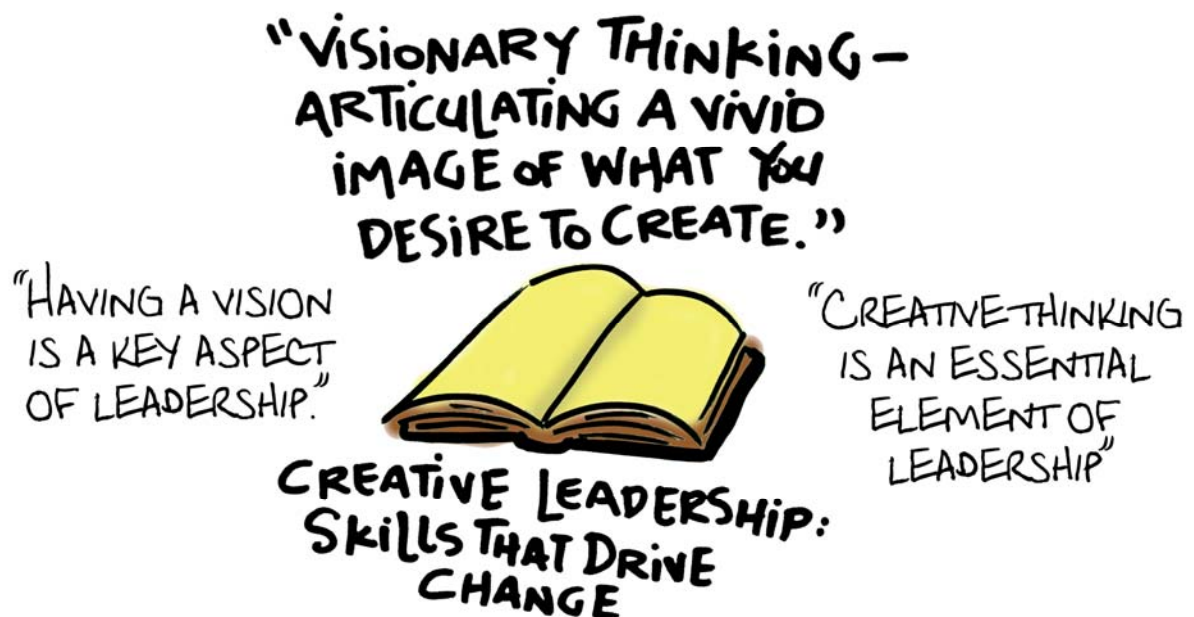


Figure 17. *Creative Leadership: Skills That Drive Change.*

Sibbet, D. (2004 – 2011). <http://www.davidsibbet.com>

Not only a current practicing professional, David Sibbet is a pioneer in visual thinking. Founder of The Grove, one of the very first visual consulting and training companies, he has published a number of resources related to graphic facilitation, group graphics, and general facilitation practices. In addition to his company website (grove.com), his personal site (davidsibbet.com) is rich with further resources, tips, and information related to visual thinking and facilitation. With such a prolific and innovative career, there is no doubt much to learn from this man. See Figure 18.

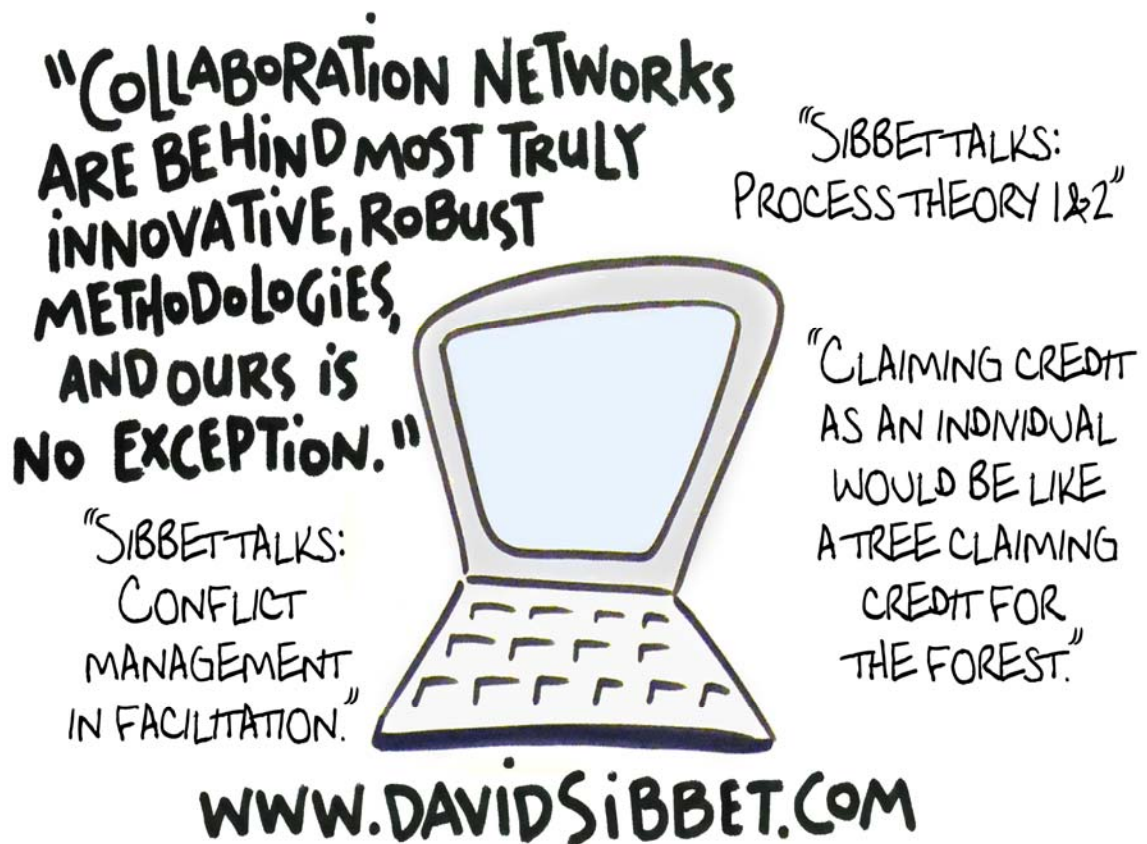


Figure 18. David Sibbet's Website.

General Bibliography

- Arnheim, R. (1971). *Entropy and art: An essay on disorder and order*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Arnheim, R. (1974). *Art and visual perception: A psychology of the creative eye* (*The new version*). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Arnheim, R. (1988). *The power of the center: A study of composition in the visual arts*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Berger, J. (1985). *The sense of sight*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Bronowski, J. (1985). *The visionary eye: Essays in the arts, literature, and science*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Burnett, R. (2004). *How images think*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Fries, A. (2009). *Daydreams at work: Wake up your creative powers*. Sterling, VA: Capital Books, Inc.
- Gardner, H. (1982). *Art, mind, & brain: A cognitive approach to creativity*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Gelb, M. J. (1998). *How to think like Leonardo da Vinci: Seven steps to genius every day*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.
- Goleman, D. (1994). *Emotional Intelligence: Why it matters more than IQ*. New York, NY: Bantom Books.
- Goleman, D. (2006). *Social intelligence: The revolutionary new science of human relationships*. New York, NY: Bantom Books.
- Heath, C. & Heath, D. (2007). *Made to stick: Why some ideas survive and others die*. New York, NY: Random House.

- Hoffman, D. D. (1998). *Visual intelligence: How we create what we see*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Kearny, L. (1996). *Graphics for presenters: How to draw your message, even if you can't draw*. Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications, Inc.
- Livingstone, M. (2002). *Vision and art: The biology of seeing*. New York, NY: Harry N Abrams, Inc.
- Malamed, C. (2009). *Visual language for designers: Principles for creating graphics that people understand*. Beverley, MA: Rockport Publishers.
- Maxwell, J.C. (2007). *The 21 irrefutable laws of leadership: Follow them and people will follow you*. Nashvills, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- May, R. (1985). *My quest for beauty*. Dallas, TX: Saybrook Publishing Company.
- McKim, R. H. (1980). *Experiences in visual thinking, second edition*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc.
- Medina, J. (2008). *Brain rules: 12 principles for surviving and thriving at work, home, and school*. Seattle, WA: Pear Press.
- Margulies, N. (2002). *Mapping inner space: Learning and teaching visual mapping*. Tuscon, AZ: Zephyr Press.
- Michalko, M (2001). *Cracking creativity: The secrets of creative genius*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.
- Parnes, S. J. (1992). *Visionizing: State-of-the-art process for encouraging innovative excellence*. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation Press.
- Pink, D. H. (2005). *A whole new mind: Why right-brainers will rule the future*. New York, NY: Riverhead books.

- Restak, R. (2006). *The naked brain: How emerging neuroscience is changing how we live, work, and love*. New York, NY: Harmony Books.
- Roam, D. (2009). *The back of the napkin: Solving problem and selling ideas with pictures (expanded edition)*. New York, NY: The Penguin Group.
- Samuels, M. & Samuels, N. (1975). *Seeing with the mind's eye: The history, techniques and uses of visualization*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Schwarz, R. (2002). *The skilled facilitator, new and revised: A comprehensive resource for consultants, facilitators, managers, trainers, and coaches*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- Sibbet, D. (2010). *Visual meetings: How graphics, sticky notes, & idea mapping can transform group productivity*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Siler, T. (1996). *Think like a genius: The ultimate user's manual for your brain*. New York, NY: Bantom Books.
- Simmons, A. (2001). *The story factor: Inspiration, influence, and persuasion through the art of storytelling*. New York, NY: Perseus Books Group.
- Sonneman, M. R. (1997). *Beyond words: A guide to drawing out ideas*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.
- Sternberg, R.J. (1996). *Successful intelligence: How practical and creative intelligence determine success in life*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Wenger, W. (1981). Creative creativity: Some strategies for developing specific areas of the brain and for working both sides together. In Parnes, S.J. (Ed.) *Sourcebook for Creative Problem Solving*. P. 254-262. Amherst, MA: Creative Education Foundation Press.

Wenger, W. (1996). *The Einstein factor: A proven new method for increasing your intelligence*. Roseville, CA: Prima Publishing.

Wheatley, M. J. (2006). *Leadership and the new science: Discovering order in a chaotic world*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Willingham, D. T. (2009). *Why don't students like school?* San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

SECTION THREE: PROCESS PLAN

Goals

The goals of this project are to deepen my understanding of the work of visual practitioners, further develop my visual thinking skills, and identify a series of action steps that will lead me to become a creatively contagious visual practitioner. These goals will partly be achieved through the completion of an online graphic facilitation class (thatcreativespace.com).

Outcomes

That Creative Space (TCS) is a work-at-your-own-pace graphic facilitation course that I have yet to begin. One module is posted every two weeks and, because the course is still being developed, I am limited to working on the current module posted and cannot work beyond that module in advance. However, the instructors were most gracious to give me a tentative outline of the twelve modules with scheduled posting dates. Because the last three modules will be posted after project due dates, my work will focus on the first nine modules for this project, and the remaining three will be completed as they are posted.

After completion of each module, I will reflect on the following two questions: How might I develop more expertise in this skill? What might be all the steps I can take to lead me closer to becoming a professional visual practitioner? The results of my reflections will be recorded on post-its and kept in a notebook. The notebook will have separate sections for thoughts and ideas related to skill development, professional development, and people to contact or work to study. Each week, I will choose at least one action step to further skill development and at least one that will lead me closer to becoming a professional visual practitioner. The flexibility of the post-its will allow me to remove the

chosen action steps from the notebook and stick them in a prominent area of my workspace to keep them forefront in my mind. Once completed, I will place the post-its in the back of the notebook to serve as a visual reminder of what I have achieved.

Some weeks, several small steps may be taken, while one big step may be taken other weeks. Some possible skill related action steps may include finding places to practice, practice with Youtube videos or podcasts, creating samples of various ways to present information graphically, creating an icon card deck, etc. Some possible employment related action steps may include contacting practicing professionals in my area, meeting with professional visual practitioners, shadowing a professional visual practitioner, updating my resume, developing my LinkedIn profile, developing a business name for myself, creating a logo, getting business cards, putting together a portfolio, studying professional visual practitioners websites, etc. Since the action steps are meant to deepen and expand the content in TCS modules, action steps will be chosen after completion of each module to better focus my energy and avoid going in too many directions at once. All work from the modules and extended practice will be posted to a blog (format permitting) for easy reference throughout the project and beyond.

At the end of the nine modules, I will examine all ideas generated for both questions. Taking into account what action steps were completed, I will discard any ideas that are redundant, irrelevant, or no longer applicable. The remaining ideas will be organized and prioritized into a variety of action steps to keep me energized and moving towards employment as a professional visual practitioner. Having an idea system in place ensures I will always have action steps to take to keep me moving toward securing income as a visual practitioner and a system to keep track of ideas when inspiration strikes.

Project Timeline

To further illustrate the ability of visuals to synthesize information and quickly convey the big picture, my anticipated timeline for this project is presented both graphically and verbally. A glance at Figure 19 reveals which weeks of the project are expected to be most labor intensive, which activities will require the most time throughout the duration of the project, and the proportion of time spend on each component of the project in relation to the others. The verbal timeline follows Figure 19 and, although three pages long, is just slightly more detailed.

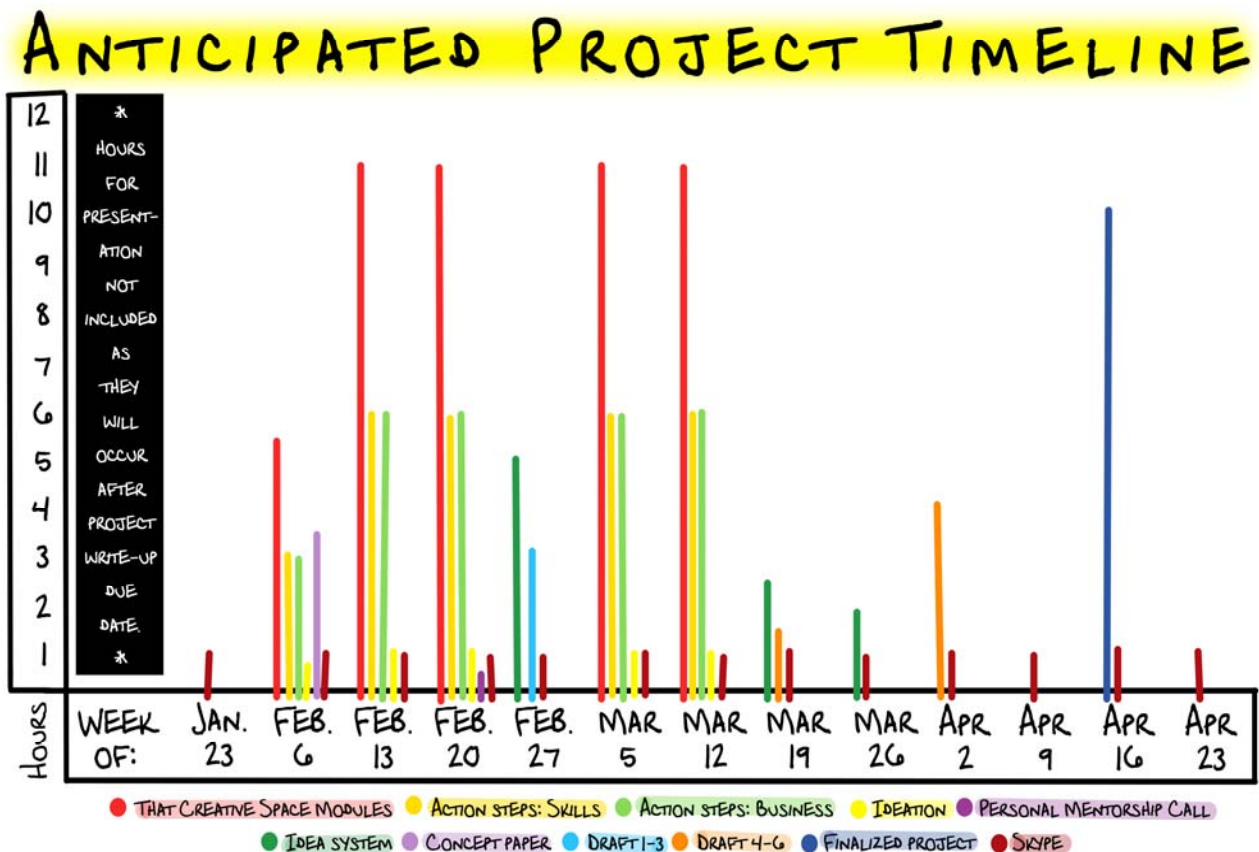


Figure 19. Anticipated Project Timeline.

Verbal Timeline

January 23 – February 5

Make title page for blog delineating master's project work

Begin skype calls with sounding board partner

February 6 – 12

Module 0 “Get Ready”

Module 1 “What is that creative space?”

Final revisions of concept paper

February 13 – 19

Module 2 “Valued Facilitation Partner”

Modules 3 “Your Personal Style

February 20 – 26

Module 4 “Timeline”

Module 5 “Gameboards/Journey Map”

30 minute personal phone consultation

February 27 – March 4

Catch up with action steps if needed

Organize and structure ideas system

Finish and submit draft of sections 1-3

March 5 – 11

Module 6 “More on Metaphors”

Module 7 “Rapid Ideations/Product Sketching”

March 12 – 18

Module 8 “Synthesis/Info Graphics”

Module 9 “Agenda Design”

March 19 – 25

Work on idea system

Begin draft of sections 4-6

March 26 – April 1

Finish idea system

April 2 – 8

Finishing touches on idea system, if needed

Begin presentation

Finish and submit draft of sections 4-6

April 9 – 15

Continue work on presentation

April 16 – 22

Finalize and submit project

Continue work on presentation

April 23 – 29

Finishing touches on presentation, if needed

April 30 – May 6

Finalize and submit presentation and project

Each of the nine modules includes:

- instructional videos = .5 hour
- hands-on work, including posting to blog = 3 hours
- support call = 1 hour
- looking and commenting on classmates work = 1 hour

Total time for TCS = 49.5 hours (plus maybe 1-2 hours for Module 0)

Additional time beyond each of the nine modules:

- reflection/ideation on both questions = .5
- action step to build skill level = 3 hours
- action step to move toward becoming a professional = 3 hours

Total time beyond each module = 58.5

Additional activities:

- at least two half-hour personal mentoring calls with TCS instructors
- compiling, evaluating, organizing, and designing idea system = 10 hours
- documenting action steps (18 action steps, 15 minutes each) = 4.5 hours
- finalizing concept paper = 3.5 hours
- draft sections 1-3 = 3 hours
- draft sections 4-6 = 6 hours
- writing and revision of final report = 10 hours
- skype calls with sounding board partner = 15 hours

Total time for additional activities = 52 hours

Total estimated time for project = 160 hours (plus maybe 1-2 hours for Module 0)

SECTION 4: OUTCOMES

That Creative Space

The goals of this project were to deepen my understanding of the work of visual practitioners, further develop my visual thinking skills, and identify a series of action steps that will lead me to become a creatively contagious visual practitioner. Although I still have much to learn, completion of the exercises from TCS was an excellent start to both knowledge and skill development, while the feedback confirmed this field is a wonderful fit for my skills, talents, and experience. Following are the outcomes of the first nine TCS modules and the feedback received for each. The feedback comes from TCS instructors (two extremely active, successful, and highly regarded professionals in the field), TCS classmates (including a broad range of seasoned professionals to new beginners from around the world), and fellow Supreme cohort members (the tenth group of people to go through the distance Master of Science Degree program at ICSC).

Community Mentorship Calls

Live community mentorship calls were held after each TCS module and were recorded for later access. Due to scheduling conflicts, I was not able to participate in the live calls, but used the recorded calls as extended practice. Figure 8 shows the results of my sketchnote efforts during these calls. See Appendix D for a full page view of one of the module calls. To conserve space, feedback precedes the image in this case.

“Great practice. These are very strong, nice variety of fonts. It’s nice to go back and add color, but with images as strong as these, you can leave them black and white if you want. They certainly do not need color” (TCS instructor, PMC, 2012).



Figure 20. Sketchnotes from TCS Modules 1-9 Community Mentorship Calls.

Module One – Self Care

The first three modules centered around personal development in regards to visual thinking and in taking on the role of a visual practitioner. Module One accentuated the role self care plays in both personal and professional success. For example, tense muscles produce tense marks on the page, while a scattered mind often results in an unorganized image. Therefore, holistic health is essential to success. An unbalance in any area will compromise the quality of work, the overall experience and satisfaction of clients, and potentially lead to burn-out.

Figure 21 shows how I intend to maintain four key areas of health during TCS and while working.

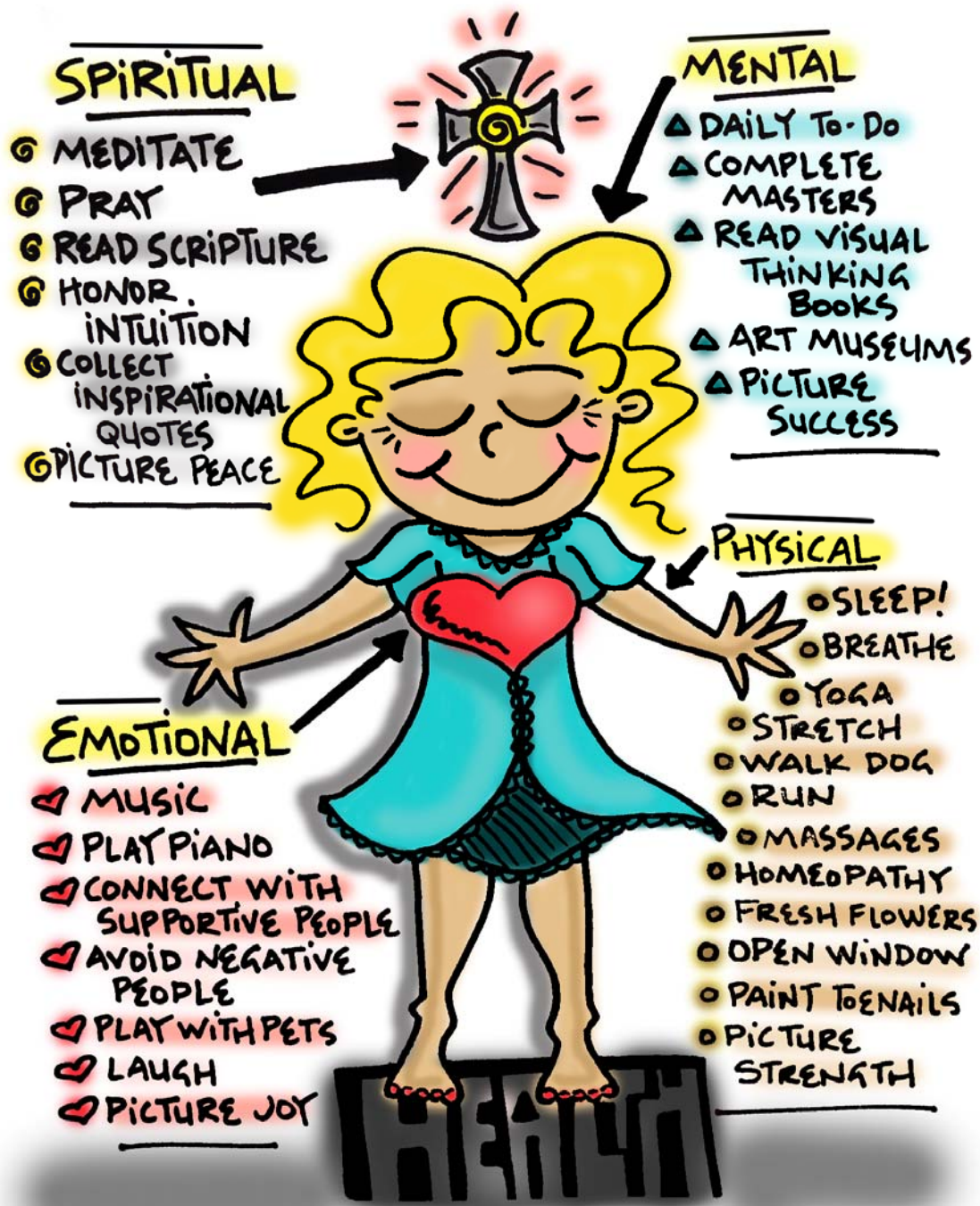


Figure 21. Self Care.

“Great, Melinda! Very warm style” (TCS classmate, 2012).

“A very strong image, well balanced, good use of color and space, confidently drawn...great writing” (TCS instructor, personal mentorship call, 2012).

Module One Extended Practice

I expanded on both the image and the idea in Figure 9 by developing my own self-care idea card system. To do this, I created five categories under each of the four main topics in Figure 21 and developed icons for each. The 20 resulting icons and definition of the words are on the front of the cards (See Figure 22). On the back of each card are specific activities or exercises relating to the category for that card, such as create a new itunes playlist, study a great work of art upside down, or make a graphic shopping list. The idea is to randomly pick one card from each of the four main topics every day to ensure attention to all four areas of health. Or, if a specific area needs more attention, I can pick several cards from that area. With 10 cards in each category, that gives me 200 cards total with a limitless capacity to grow.



Figure 22. Self Care Cards.

Module Two – Unique Selling Points

The second module in the personal development strand focused on defining our Unique Selling Points (USP). The goal was to define our own unique mix of strengths, skills, and abilities of value to potential clients; in other words, articulate why someone might want to hire me and the benefits of doing so. Figure 23 shows the results of the visual brainstorm of my strengths, while Figure 24 is the resulting attempt to show my Unique Selling Points as a visual practitioner.

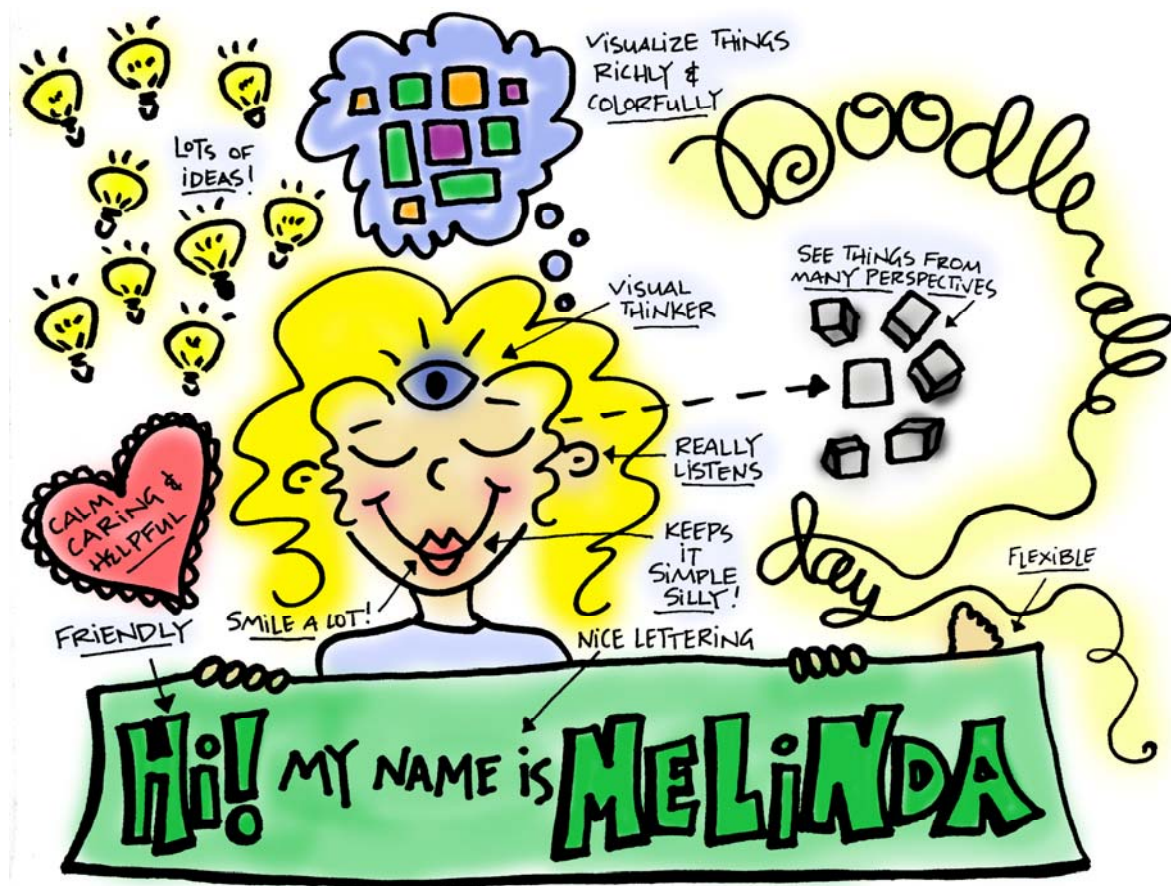


Figure 23. Visual Brainstorm of my Strengths.

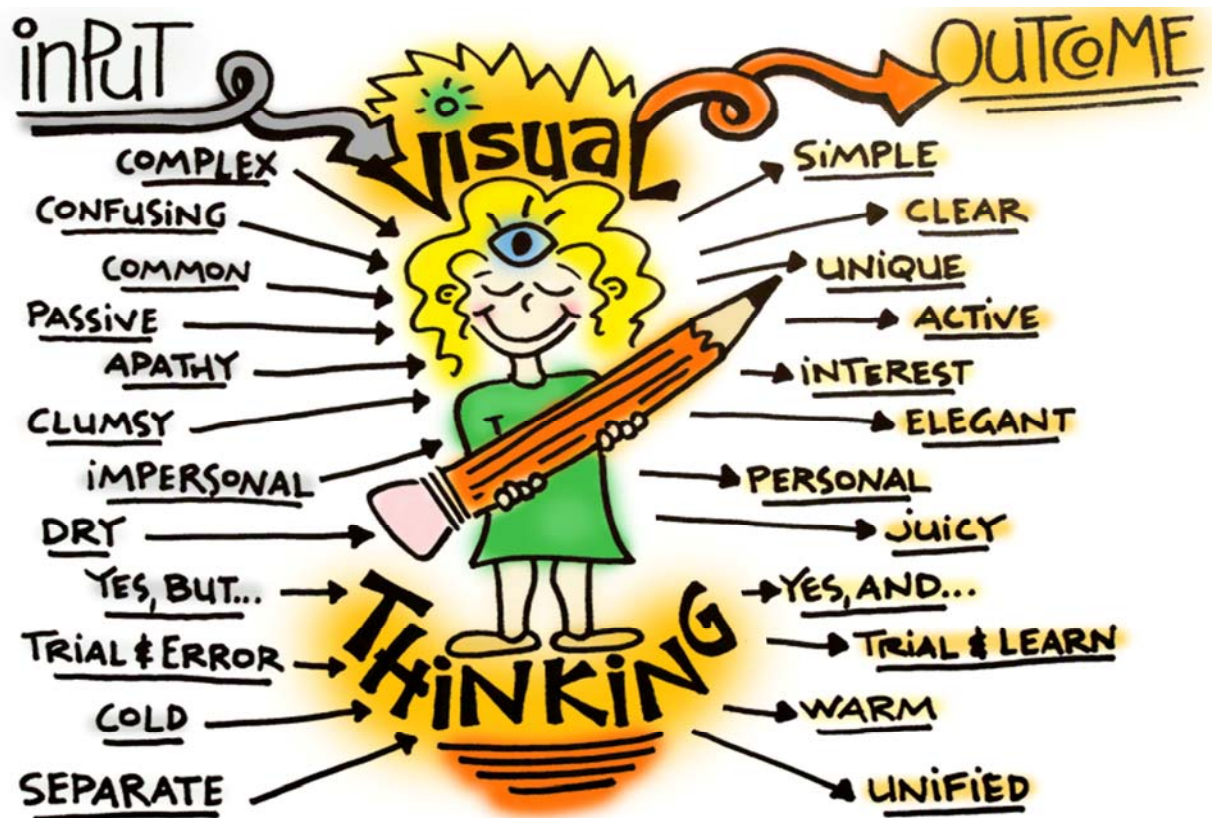


Figure 24. My Unique Selling Points as a Visual Practitioner.

“Again, very strong images with a nice variety of fonts. Very playful “doodle” font. The “input – output” design could easily be applied to any variety of client situations. Great curvy arrows, too” (TCS instructor, PMC, 2012).

Module Three – Personal Style

The last module regarding personal development, Module Three required identification of our sources of artistic inspiration. Conscious articulation of foundational forces on our personal style leads to a greater understanding of one’s style, the ability to articulate it more clearly to others, and can potentially point to additional sources of inspiration. Figure 25 shows the influences on my artistic style and development throughout my life. This is also somewhat like a journey map.

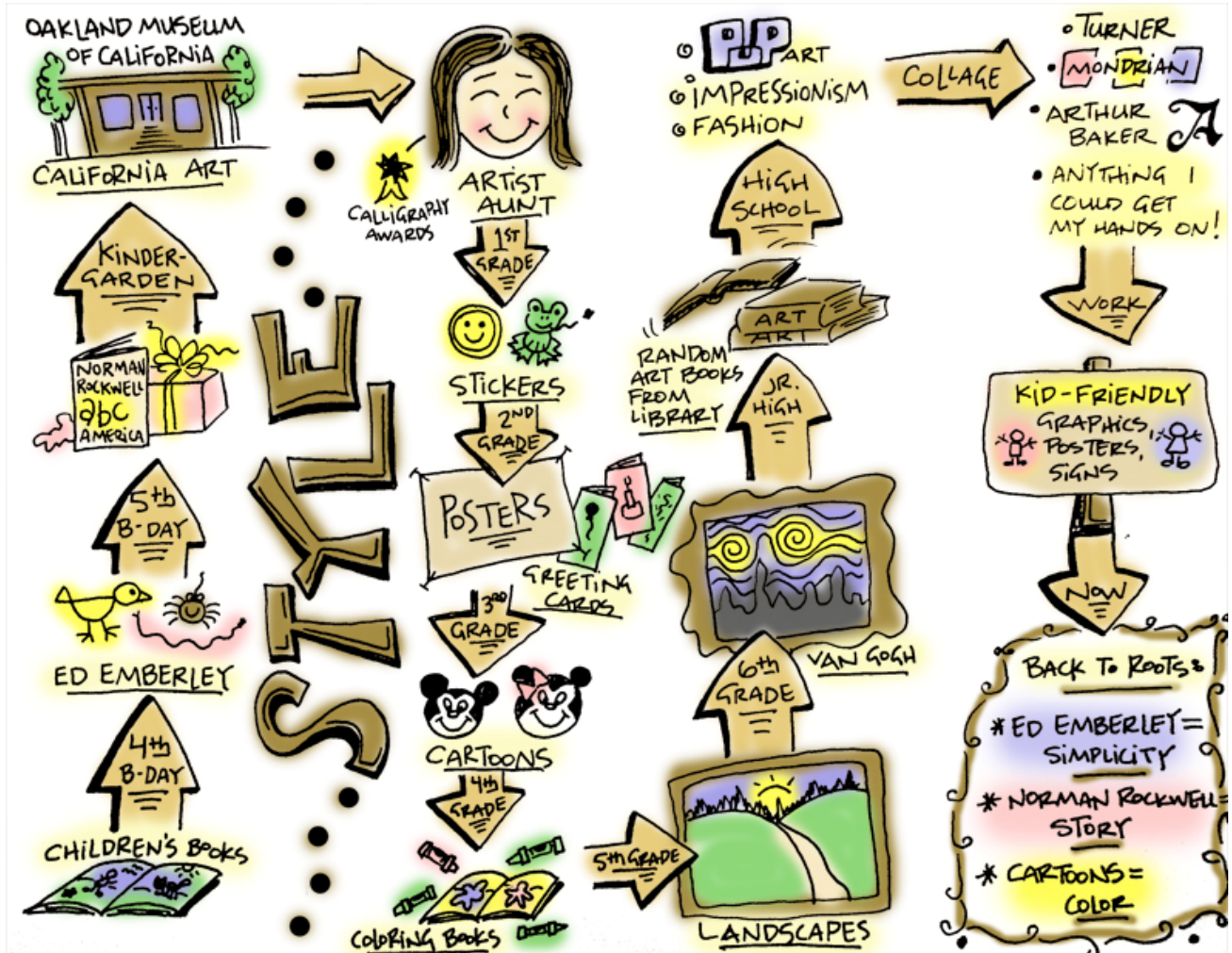


Figure 25. Artistic Influences on my Style.

"I really enjoy this - I don't feel it's cramped, rather, it seems rich to me. Such fun visuals and a great visual journey through your development" (TCS classmate, 2012).

"I know we talked about this on your PMC (Personal Mentoring Call)... the organization and limited color and strong visuals are so well balanced in this image. Very cool!" (TCS instructor, 2012).

Module Four - Timelines

The first of six modules devoted to skill development, Module Four focused on the use and creation of timelines. Timelines can be used in a variety of settings to highlight progress made, as well as to cast a vision of future goals and the steps required to meet them. Examples of timelines used to illustrate a rich history of progress are found in Figures 26 & 27. Historical timelines, such as these, can serve as powerful reminders to those involved of the giants on whose shoulders they stand, in this case the likes of Alex Osborn and Sidney Parnes at ICSC. Figures 26 & 27 are the same basic timeline of the International Center for Studies in Creativity with two different color applications.

(As a side note, this is a very simplified version of ICSC history and simply gives a quick glimpse into a very rich past. The elements included all have some personal relevance to me: Professors I had while in the program, scholars I studied, books I own, the E-to-E conference I hope to attend next year, and my graduation!)

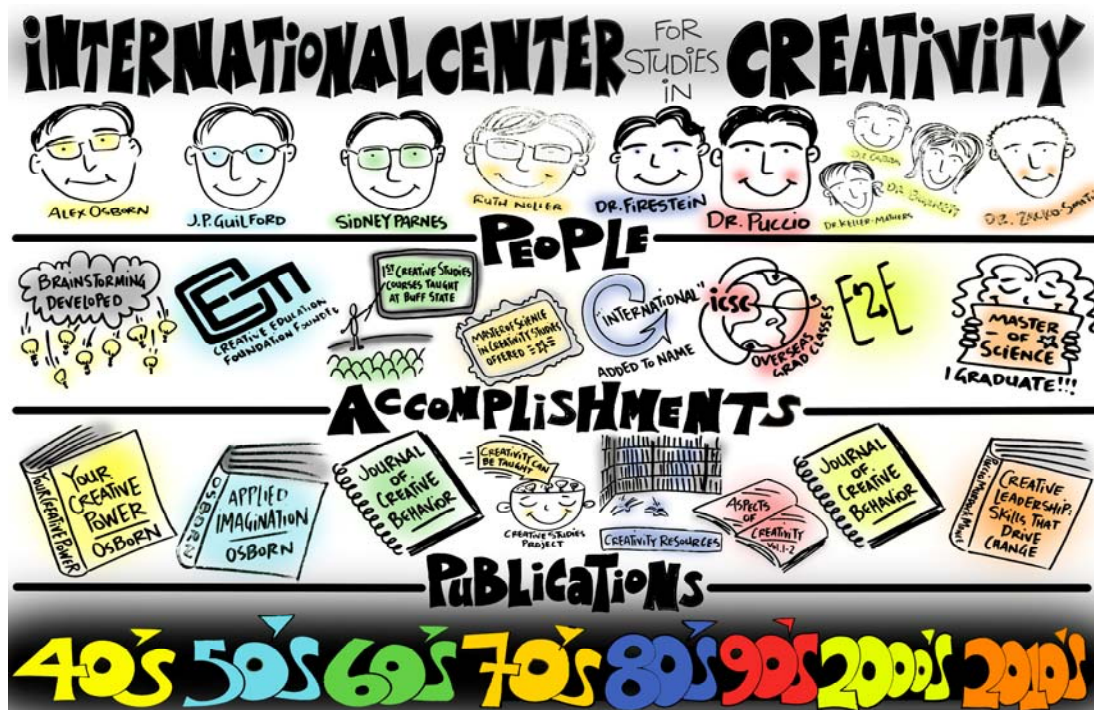


Figure 26. ICSC Timeline.

“This is a wonderful timeline. Your fonts and colors along the bottom do a great job grounding the image. I also appreciate how you put the track labels across the center. This image is very clean, colorful and easy to understand. I really like the details you did with "spot" color on the glasses or cheeks” (TCS instructor, 2012).

“Interesting to use the color to show how the people, accomplishments and publications line up with the dates” (TCS instructor, 2012).

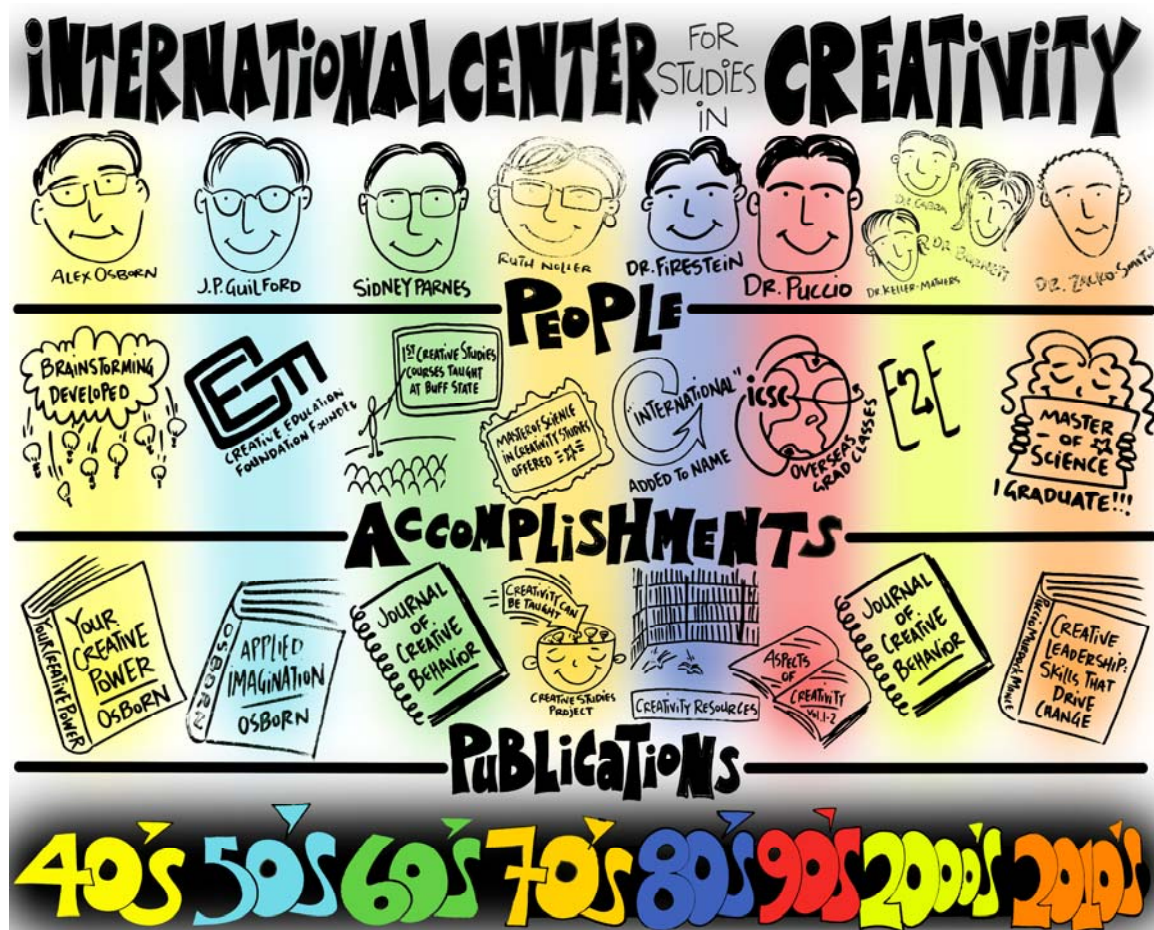


Figure 27. Second ICSC Timeline.

Module Five – Journey Maps

Figure 28 depicts Ekvall's Creative Climate Dimensions (1996) as a journey map. It is meant to be used during a teaching or training session, or as a metaphor to further flesh out the current and desired climates in a group, organization, company, or classroom.

Done large scale, this could provide a structure for clustering ideas in regards to each area or literally as a map to guide facilitators in articulating the essential components for the environment of the session. After completing this, I realized credit to Ekvall needs to be included in the design, which can easily be added later.



Figure 28. Ekvall's Creative Climate Dimension Treasure Map.

“Looks like a really fun and effective image to use when kicking off a brainstorming or ideation session with peeps” (TCS instructor, 2012).

“I love this is the reverse of a treasure map with the ocean in the middle and not along the outside. You have included lots of fun details and great visual icons for each element. The coloring is also very strong to help things like the text really pop off the page and not get lost in the brown color of the land or the blue of the ocean” (TCS instructor, 2012).

“This has great charm and wit. What did you use - were you on an iPad, a tablet, paper?” (TCS classmate, 2012).

“I liked the island one best and will give it a 10 (out of 10). It grabbed and held my attention more than the rest” (Supreme cohort member, 2012).

“Clever, but not too clear on content. Impact 6, Value 6, Professionalism 7” (Supreme cohort member, 2012).

“I really like the composition and colors of this one. It covers some of the same ground as the above poster (Workplace Evaluation), but in my mind it functions more like an illustration than a teaching tool. Again, there's not a real "title" to situation the viewer, so I found myself looking around to get oriented. Of course, since it was a map, that was fun. Impact – 7, Value – 8, Professionalism – 9” (Supreme cohort member, 2012).

“Impact 9, Value 9, Professionalism 10” (Supreme cohort member, 2012).

Module Five – Gameboards

Figure 29 shows the Thinking Skills Model (Puccio, Mance, & Murdock, 2010) as a Trivial Pursuit type game board. It is intended to be used at a teaching, training, or facilitation session. I originally envisioned this as a floor-sized game that would literally walk people through the process, so was happy to find others agree.

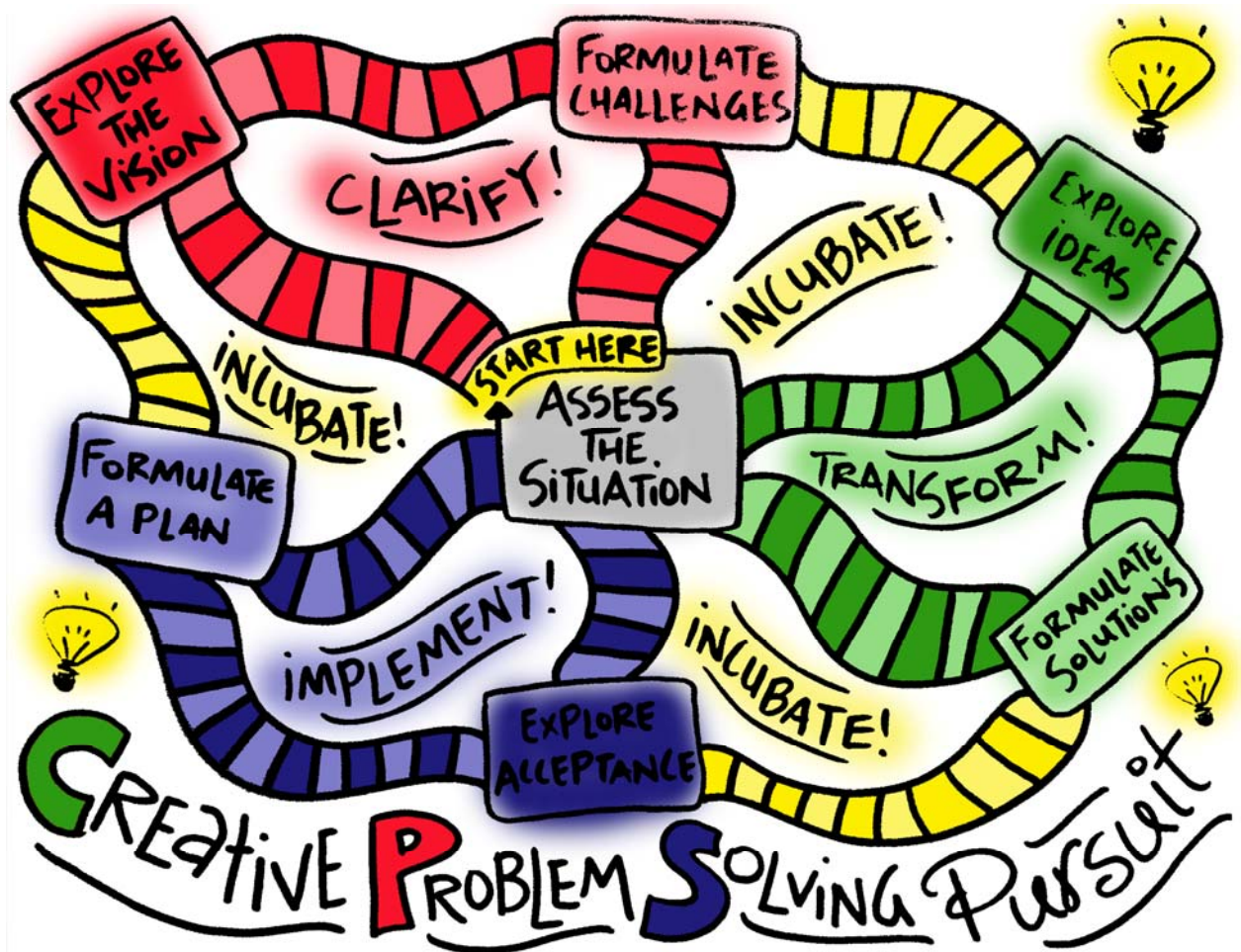


Figure 29. Creative Problem Solving Gameboard.

“I could see this as a huge floor-sized gameboard!” (TCS instructor, 2012).

“I love this! It makes me hear music. How about putting it together with Peter's idea of the floor-covering game board, putting on rock music, and having everyone dance their way through it?” (TCS classmate, 2012).

“Melinda, I love how confidently you pull off curves and wonky lines. They are so solid and grounded. This Gameboard is very fun and adaptable for clients to come up with ways to apply it to their own work. Your handwriting is pretty darn "cool" too. Very strong, confident and yet varying in capital, lowercase and almost cursive” (TCS instructor, 2012).

“Impact 8, Value 10, Professionalism 8” (Supreme cohort member, 2012).

“Could use more images and text maybe? Impact 6, Value 7, Professionalism 6” (Supreme cohort member, 2012).

“Last, but not that far behind the others. Last probably because there just was less there to keep me engaged” (Supreme cohort member, 2012).

“This is the first time I've seen the Thinking Skills Model look like it would be fun to do! Bravo. One technical note is that the "explore acceptance" box is a little hard to read because the purple is so dark, but you probably knew that! Impact 10, Value 10, Professionalism 10” (Supreme cohort member, 2012).

“The only one that I might question is the value of the games, not sure who would play them or in what context but they look awesome and make sense to me” (Supreme cohort member, 2012).

Module Six – Metaphors

Metaphors relate something abstract to something concrete, allowing for greater ease in comprehension and deeper exploration of a topic. Module Six was all about the creation of visuals to illustrate and develop metaphors applicable to business settings. The idea is to use the visuals to start the conversation and continue to build it as a group as details are more fully clarified. Figures 30-32 show three potential metaphor images.

Potential question to further the discussion surrounding the garden metaphor might include: When is our harvest season? Are we being overtaken by weeds? Are we planting our seeds in the richest soil? Would it be wise to rotate our crops? Are we careful to water our crops when it does not rain? Are the bugs helping or hindering our growth?

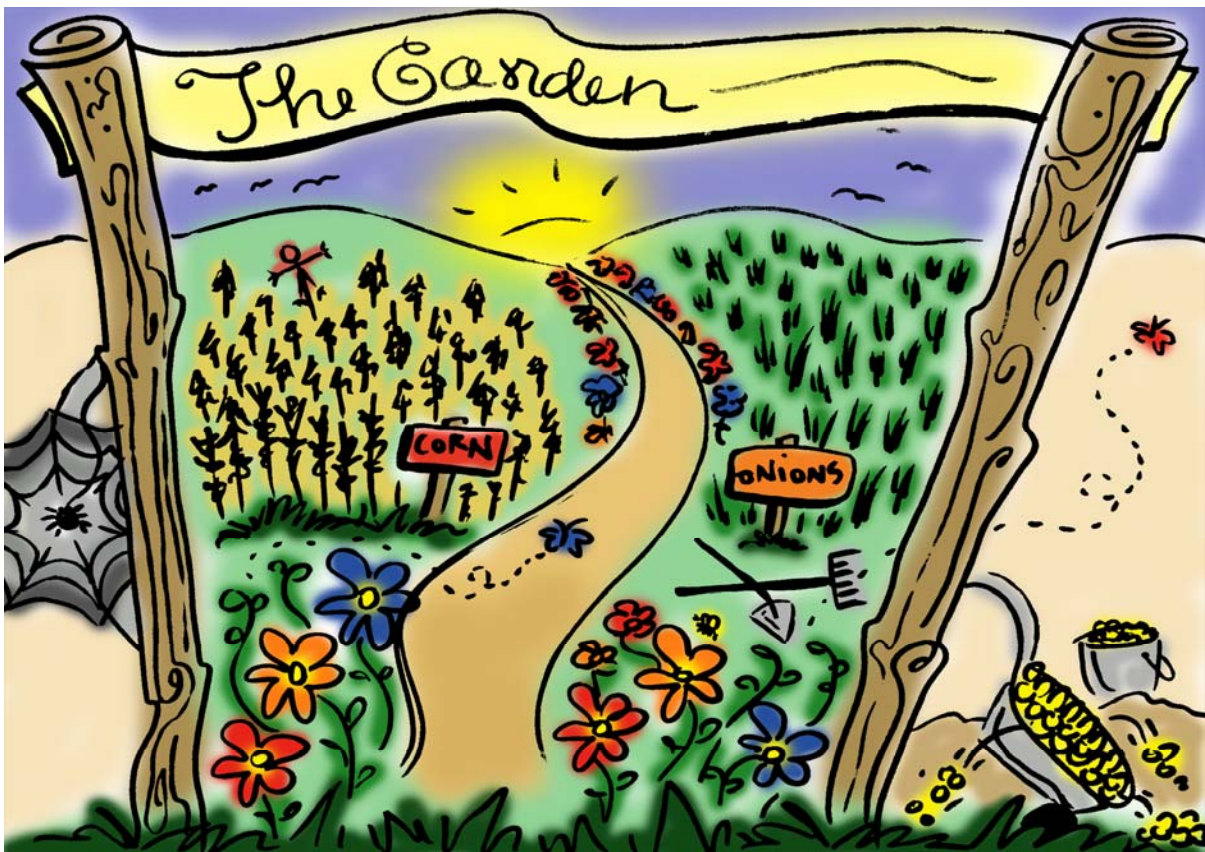


Figure 30. Garden Metaphor.

“Hi Melinda, I know we talked about this one our PMC. I want to comment here too and share that is a great metaphor example as well and shows multiple levels to the metaphor. The spider, path, garden and ecosystem can create such a rich bed for discovery for a client who is really trying to understanding their marketing and strategy” (TCS instructor, 2012)

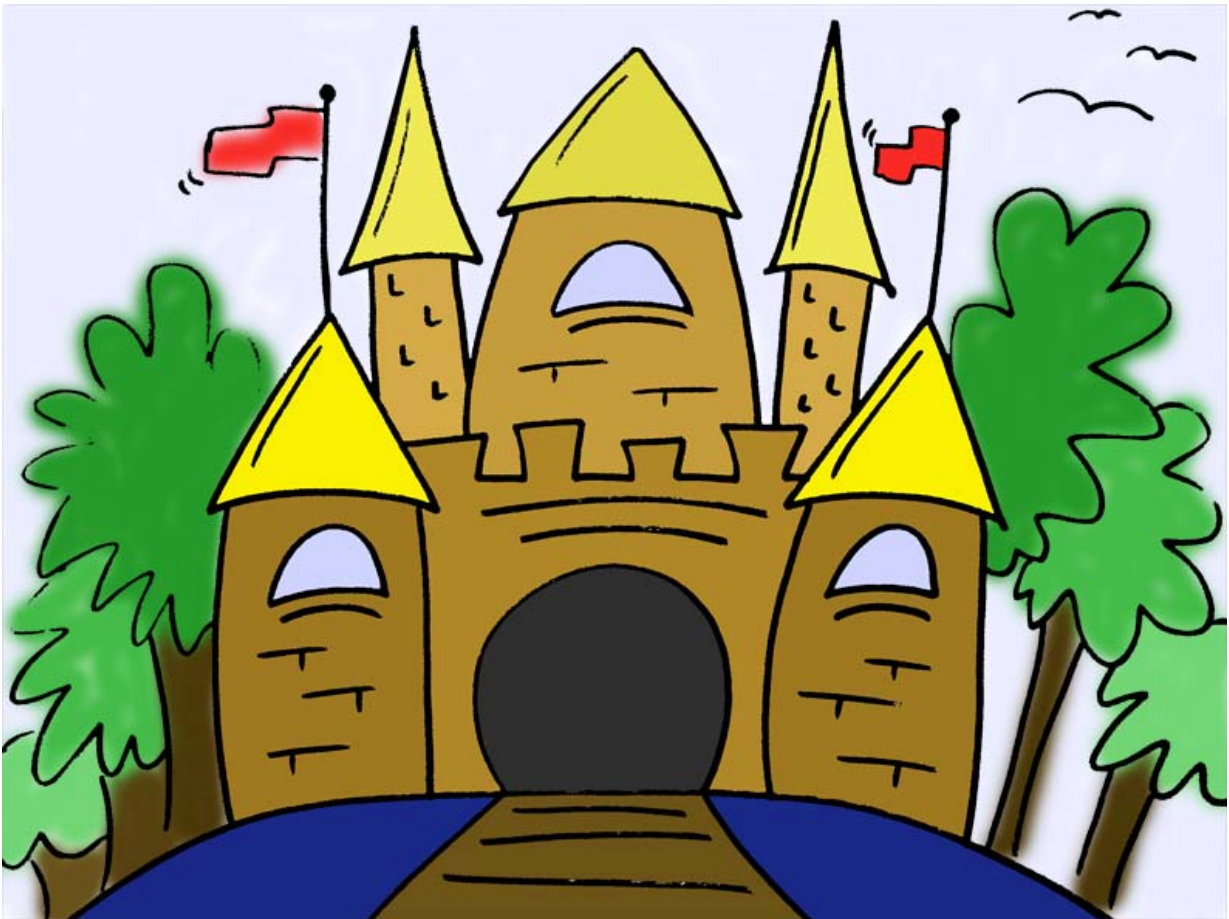


Figure 31. Castle Metaphor.

“Looks like fun. Great colors” (TCS classmate, 2012).

“With this one...Melinda and I talked about adding the knights, the princess, the moat, the village, the catapults aimed at the fortress walls, etc.” (TCS instructor, 2012.



Figure 32. Additions to Castle Metaphor.



Figure 33. House Metaphor.

“Love the whimsy-very fun!” (TCS classmate, 2012).

“Love the Dr. Seuss feel of this great house!!” (TCS instructor, 2012).

Module Seven – Rapid Ideation

Another key skill for facilitators, rapid ideation, was the focus of Module Seven.

Visual practitioners are often called in when fresh ideas are needed. During ideation, the ideas generally come in a fast and furious fashion and require rapid drawing and writing skills. The use of icons and symbols during this process helps participants visualize the concepts, see them more clearly, and make it easier to examine ideas from multiple perspectives. Patterns more readily appear when ideas are presented visually and allow the group to more quickly identify the ideas worth pursuing further. Figure 34 was created on four sheets of newsprint and combined in one electronic deliverable to better simulate a real client rapid ideation experience.

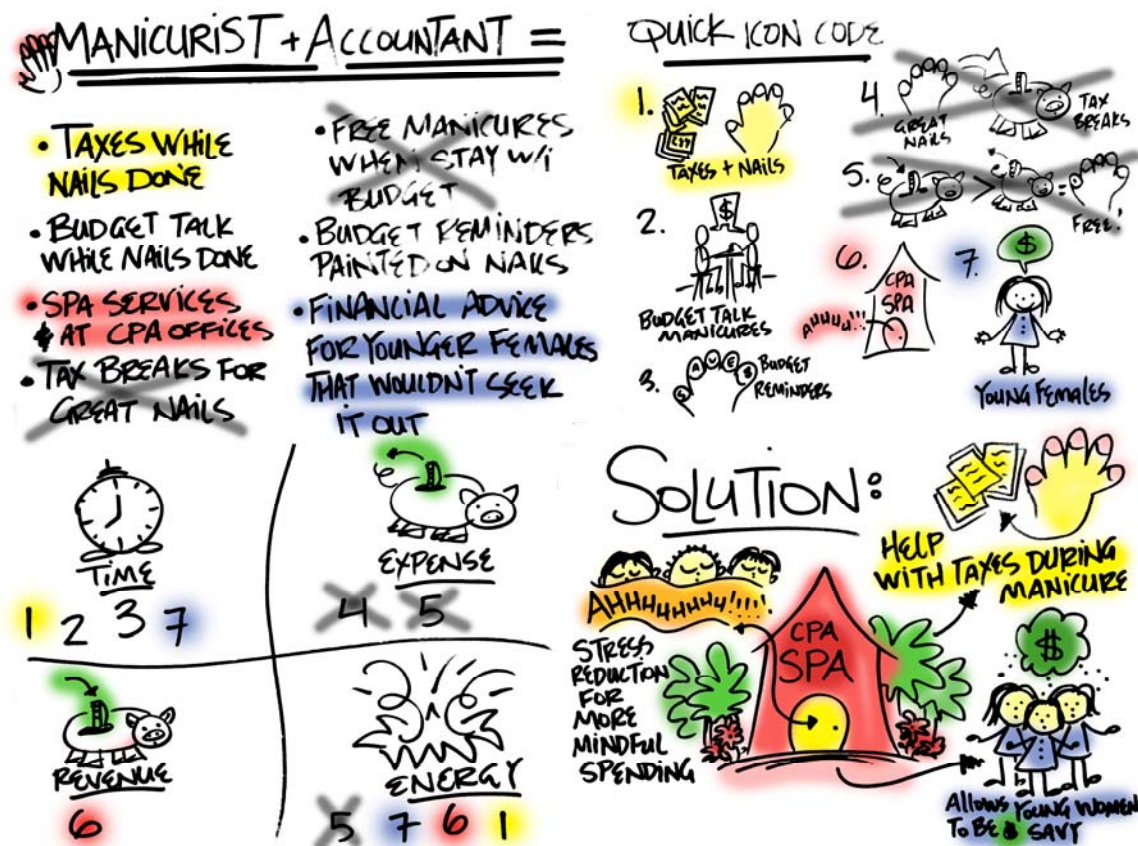


Figure 34. Rapid Ideation for a Manicurist and Accountant Business Combination.

“I really like the way you have struck out some of the ideas in Photoshop. I guess if you were doing this live with a group you would just use a light grey pen or something? Though it is rapid, it still looks organized and I like that” (TCS classmate, 2012).

“Great work on the Rapid Ideation Exercise. I can see where you went through all the stages of the exercise to create a solution” (TCS instructor, 2012).

“Holy cuticles, Batman! If this business doesn't already exist, then it should! You can see how this kind of brainstorming, albeit playful, can stretch people into real solutions” (TCS instructor, 2012).

“Another suggestion is to also try to brainstorm a long list of activities (30-40) each on an index card. Then stand at a large wall with the deck of ideas shuffled, select an idea and quickly create a title and sketch for the idea. When doing rapid ideation, you have to be able to think super quick and just go with your first idea. It can be a little overwhelming but it is easier to practice on your own than in front of a client” (TCS instructor, 2012).

Figure 35 shows the results of the above mentioned exercise, with 86 items sketched in 45 minutes. I found this type of exercise to be very beneficial in my initial exploration in visual thinking last fall. Being able to quickly draw a wide variety of clear and identifiable concepts is at the heart of the recording side of this field and certainly valuable to the facilitation, design, and illustration aspects as well.



Figure 35. Rapid Random Word Drawings.

Figure 36 is another attempt at rapid ideation, this time for a florist and chimney sweep business combination and labeled to showcase the ideation process.

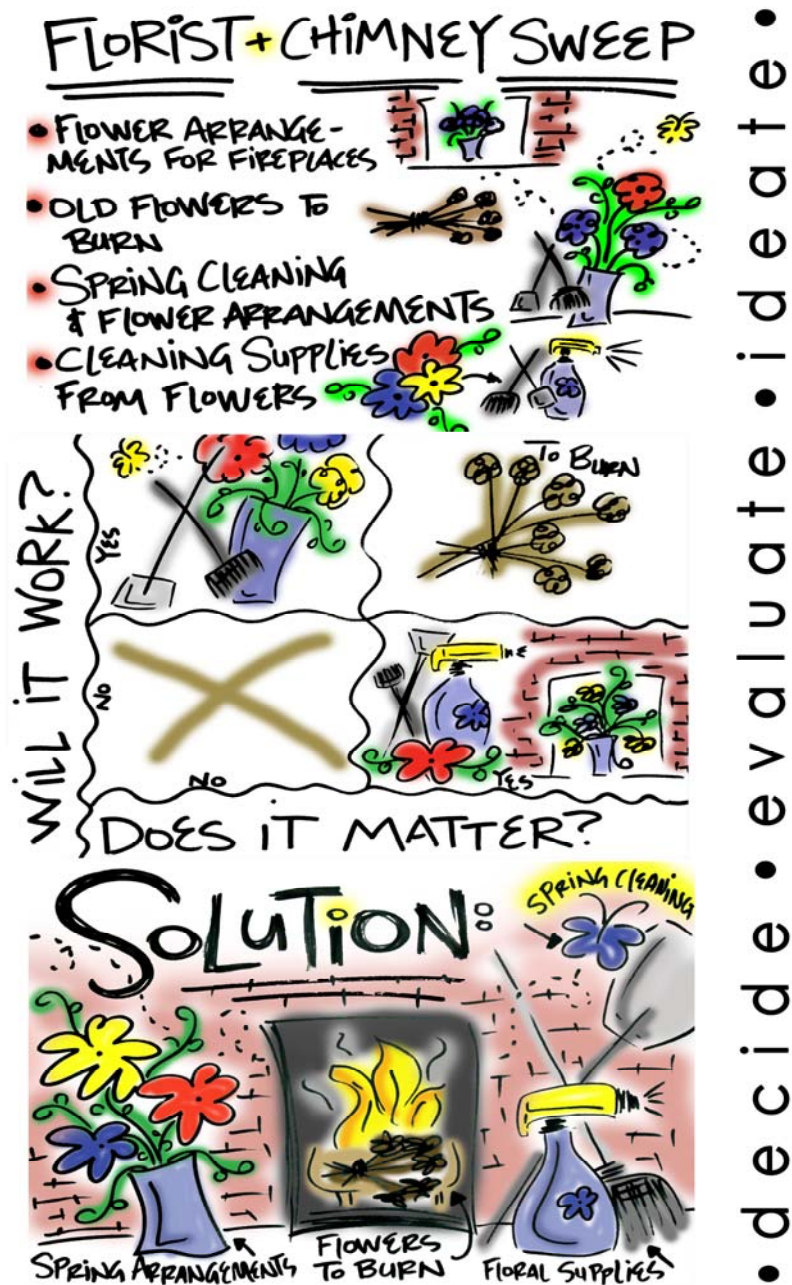


Figure 36. Second Rapid Ideation Deliverable.

“You have done a great job organizing your image to help the viewer follow the flow of the process” (TCS instructor, 2012).

Module Eight – Synthesis.

A synthesis image offers a concise, articulate summary of a meeting, event, or body of information. These are done after the fact or at the end of a session and are related to graphic design in that regard. Unlike drawings done live, synthesis images can be more refined, detailed, and even researched if desired. Figure 37 shows a synthesis image for modules 1-8 of TCS.



Figure 37. Synthesis Image of Modules 1-8 of TCS.

“You accomplished the task in producing an image that defines synthesis: The combining of separate elements or substances to form a coherent whole” (TCS instructor, 2012).

“Melinda, this is beautiful. You definitely have your own look and feel to your images. The way you designed the flowers using different shapes is such a fun detail and surprise. Your color palette is nice and strong too and helps the eye to focus. Way to bring it all together” (TCS instructor, 2012).

Module Nine – Agenda Design

Figure 38 is an agenda for a facilitated ideation session for a group of 40 small business owners and freelancers who need to network and market themselves. It is purely hypothetical, but a topic I need to dig into myself.



Figure 38. Agenda Design.

“Melinda, this is so fun! Love the flow, your whimsy, and the colors. Thanks for leading the way” (TCS classmate, 2012).

“This agenda is so very clear, I like the way you were able to use time, titles and graphics and still use an agenda approach” (Supreme cohort member, 2012).

“There is no "right".... Only effective! And this does the trick. Fascinated to know what the gumdrop exercise is. Your agenda accomplishes the purpose of the exercise in identifying the type of event, defining the group format, and illustrated in a clear format that could be used by a facilitator to explain the day” (TCS instructor, 2012).

“Yeah Melinda! This is a wonderful agenda. I love the little birds for the start and finish. Very playful, informative and easy to understand. Thanks for sharing” (TCS instructor, 2012).

I had a vague idea of what the gumdrop activity would look like when I created the agenda. For further practice, I really fleshed out the idea and created the visuals to go with it, as if for a real ideating session. Figures 39 & 40 show the two main visuals, followed by feedback from a Supreme cohort member.



Figure 39. Gumdrop Activity.



Figure 40. Gumdrop Guide.

“I like the name "gumdrop", great way to remember. Great to see you're working on networking. Making a goal of 20 groups will force you to diverge beyond the obvious. Graphics look good!” (2012).

Feedback on Three Images not from TCS

While the feedback from TCS was most helpful, I wanted to get a clearer picture of how my work might be received by those outside of the class. Five images were sent to my Supreme cohort members: Two of the images were from TCS, one image was part of a collaboration, one was my extended practice, and the remaining image was created as part of my independent study last fall. All images were sent in individual files, with no explanation, and just a request to evaluate the impact, value, and professionalism on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being supreme. No context or background information about the images created a sense of ambiguity that allowed me to see the variety of ways the images may be interpreted if presented in an online portfolio, since there is no guarantee any written explanations will be read. This also allowed me to see how readily viewers might find value in the structure and overall “look” of an image, regardless of the content, and mentally adapt an image to meet their needs. For example, the image entitled “Expert Feedback” (Figure 41) could easily be adapted to “Global Feedback” and serve as a synthesis image for a meeting at a large corporation, simply by changing the content but maintaining the structure and style.



Figure 41. Synthesis Image for Feedback From Last Semester.

Image 1

Figure 41 is a synthesis image created at the conclusion of my independent study in graphic recording last semester. Of all my work, this image comes closest to achieving the standard industry look for this type of work. By positioning this image alongside more stylized work, I hoped to get a cleared picture of how others would evaluate both quality and style of all the images. Here is what members of my Supreme cohort had to say:

"I REALLY enjoyed this picture about expert feedback. I read the whole thing and found it immensely valuable and instructive. The advice was specific and non-obvious. Your drawings made it quite memorable and easy to grasp. I put a slightly lower score for

impact because at first I wasn't quite sure what the poster was about. After looking at it a bit, I figured it was almost like your own mindmap of what you'd learned from experts. Once I got clear on that, I loved spending time with this image. Impact 8, Value 10, Professionalism 10.”

“Lots of great info; looks as good as anything I've seen by graphic facilitators.”

“Super lists, bubbles and images, makes sense. Impact 9, Value 8, Professionalism 8.”

“I would maybe make it a tiny bit less busy (maybe just to provide a tiny bit more space at the middle of the page between what it is written and the "cloud".”

“Impact 6, Value 4, Professionalism 10.”

Image 2

Figure 42 is a visual representation of Sue Besemer’s Creative Product Analysis Model (2006). I created this with the intent of giving it to those who agreed to evaluate my work. After further thought, however, I realized it would not be the most practical or efficient way to gain feedback for three reasons: It was designed for paper and pencil and my feedback would be given and received online; evaluating ten factors for every image would be quite time consuming and I did not want to impose on people’s busy schedules; and I realized impact, value, and professionalism were really the three things I was most interested in assessing. I remembered to credit Besemer directly on this image, however it is too small to see in Figure 42. See Appendix C for a larger version, however credit to Besemer is still hard to read, since the image was designed to be printed on larger paper.

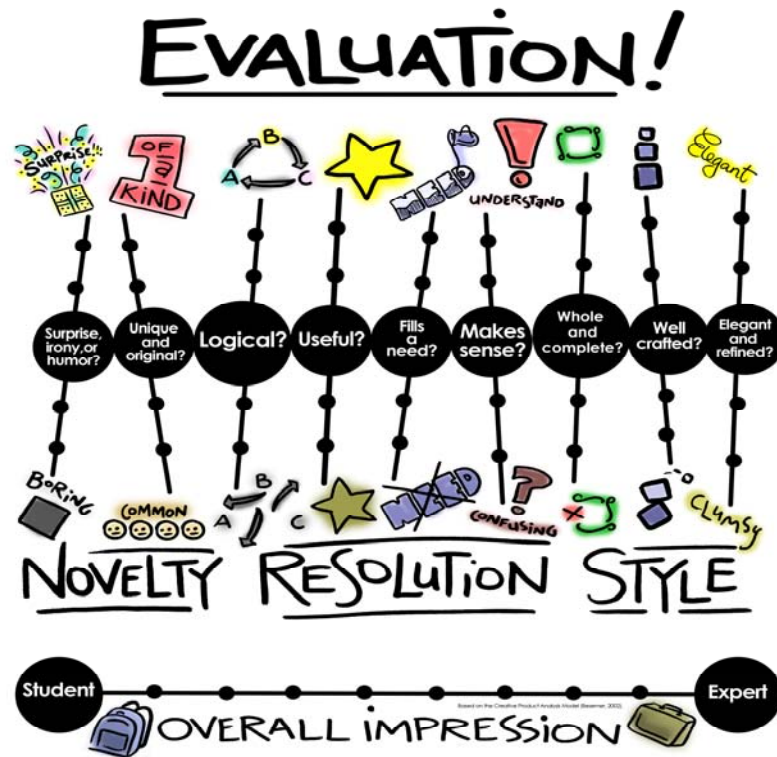


Figure 42. Evaluation Form Based on Sue Besemer's Creative Product Analysis.

"I found this picture to be fun, colorful and tight. You pack in lots of information, yet didn't overload it. I found this useful, but again I was a little confused about the overall subject. It took me a minute to figure out that the evaluation was criteria for judging professional vs. student graphic images. Impact 8, Value 8, Professionalism 9."

"This one was hard for me to understand the meaning of the content. Impact 9, Value 9, Professionalism 9."

"A close overall third."

"Impact 10, Value 10, Professionalism 10."

Image 3

More inspiration from Ekvall (1996), Figure 43 shows a handout designed for participants to assess their current work environment. This image was adapted at the request of a Supreme cohort member to use in a training session, so I was fairly certain it was professionally applicable. I still wanted to find out what other Supreme cohort members thought of it. Here is what they had to say:

“Coming in fourth was Workplace Evaluation, which did not look as refined as the others - but still really good.”

“Love this one! Neat, clear, colorful. Impact 9, Value 9, Professionalism 9.”

“I love this guy. It's fun and interactive and dynamic. It depicts complex, research-based information in a very approachable and engaging way. I think every organization in the world should have a poster-sized copy so they can record and watch their progress over time. Impact 10, Value 10, Professionalism 10.”

“Impact 10, Value 10, Professionalism 10”

WORKPLACE EVALUATION!

Think about a typical day, week, or month in your workplace. Place a dot on the line by each category corresponding to your workplace environment in that area. Then connect the dots you drew to see current strengths and areas for potential growth.

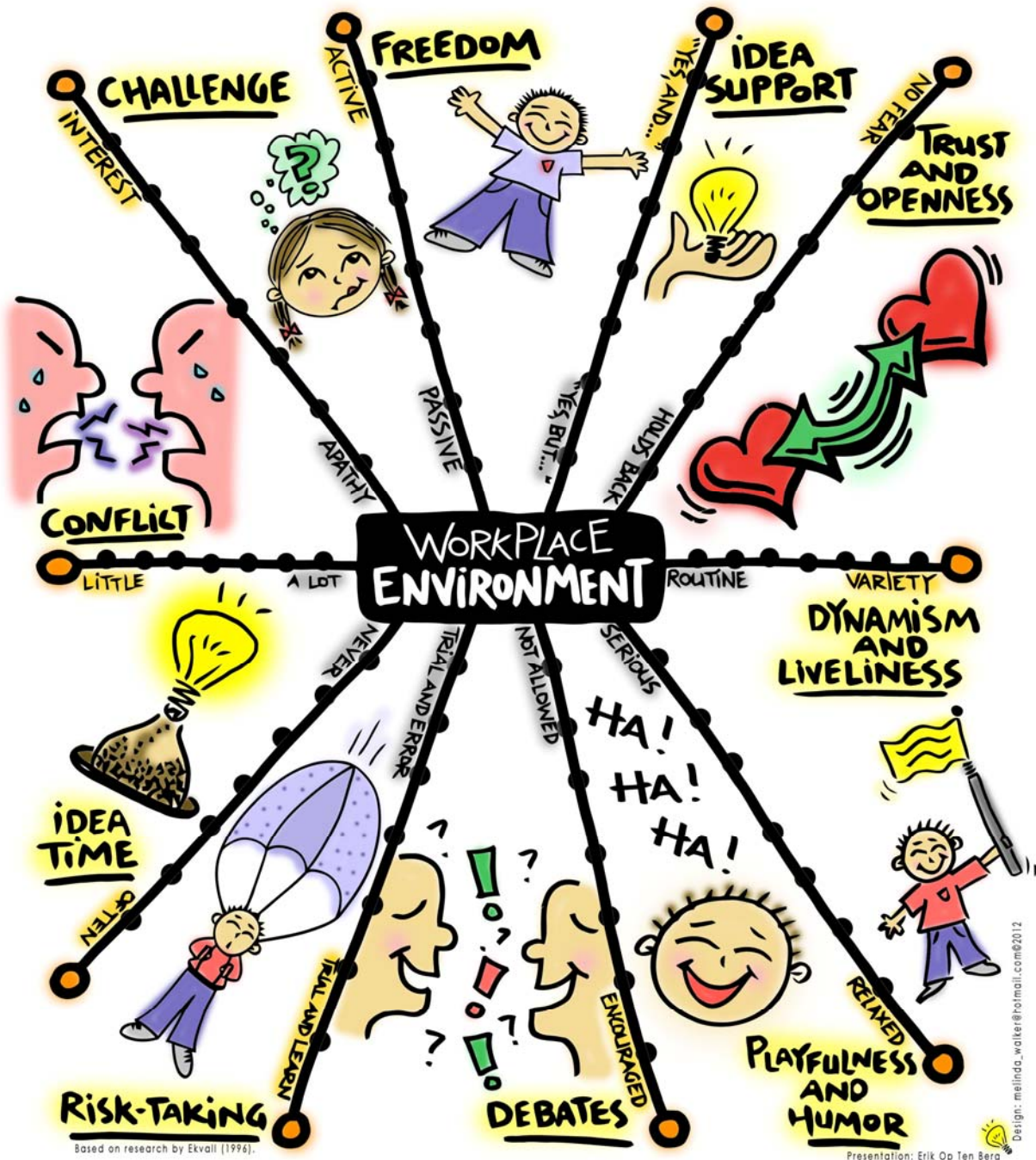


Figure 43. Workplace Environment Evaluation.

General Feedback from Supreme Cohort Members

General comments from my Supreme cohort members on the five images previously discussed and shown in Figure 44 are found below. Average scores for all three criteria (one being student work, ten being supreme) are as follows: Image 1 = 9; Image 2 = 9; Image 3 = 8.8; Image 4 = 9.6; Image 5 = 9.9. Overall scores for the three criteria are as follows: Impact = 9.2; Value = 9.3; Professionalism = 9.4. This feedback is very encouraging and confirms I am moving in the right direction.



Figure 44. Five Images Sent to Supreme Cohort Members for Feedback.

“Melinda, these are fabulous. I, personally, especially like the evaluation one. I think these bring the topics to life. “

“I love how graphic these are. I especially like the way you combine type and print in text. So, I think they have lots of impact, and they absolutely look young and zippy, and professional in that way. I also think they are valuable...So I give all 5 of them an 8, based on that.”

“Melinda, beautiful work!”

“Your illustrations are admirable! Beautifully done, in terms of professionalism, content, clarity and beauty. Very colorful, dynamic, engaging too. 10 over 10 on the three criteria you proposed. And I don't say this just to compliment you, I seriously mean it.”

“I love all these pictures! Some had content that was very familiar. Many I found very instructive and informative... Nice job Melinda. You really are poised to contribute so much to this field of creativity by bringing this talent to the table.”

“The ones on evaluation and environment I would rate as a 12! for impact, value and professionalism! They are just amazing work. The others are good but don't make the same impact, nevertheless I would give them a 10.”

“The only thing I would suggest for improvement is that you work on reflecting racial diversity...particularly with the workplace environment one...that doesn't mean just changing skin tones but adding more diversity in terms of mouth/lip shapes, nose shapes, hair styles...you can even put a scarf on someone's head.”

“Impact - all 10. Professionalism - all 10. Value - all 10. When I compare the impact of your visuals to those on inclusion.com, yours are way superior! I am serious.”

Collaboration

Although not a formal goal of this project, collaboration was definitely a hope and one I am happy to say materialized quite nicely, with the promise of more to come. This is something I am most excited about and found to be a very enjoyable part of the project.

Skype

My first collaborative efforts emerged in the form of sketchnotes taken during skype chats with my sounding board partner (SBP). I was most fortunate to have a fabulous SBP and I thoroughly enjoyed our conversations, many of which included discussion of possible collaborative opportunities. Sketchnoting our calls provided much needed practice on my part and also documented the discussions for us. These sketchnotes can be seen in Figure 45, including one call with my advisor. Also see Appendix E.



Figure 45. Sketchnotes of Skype Calls with my SBP and Advisor.

Classroom Environment

With my background in education, I was more than happy to work with my SBP, Linda, to develop materials for use with her project: Taking creativity tools into elementary schools. The first was this worksheet for teachers to assess their own classroom environment, based on Ekvall's Creative Climate Dimensions (1996), as seen in Figure 46.

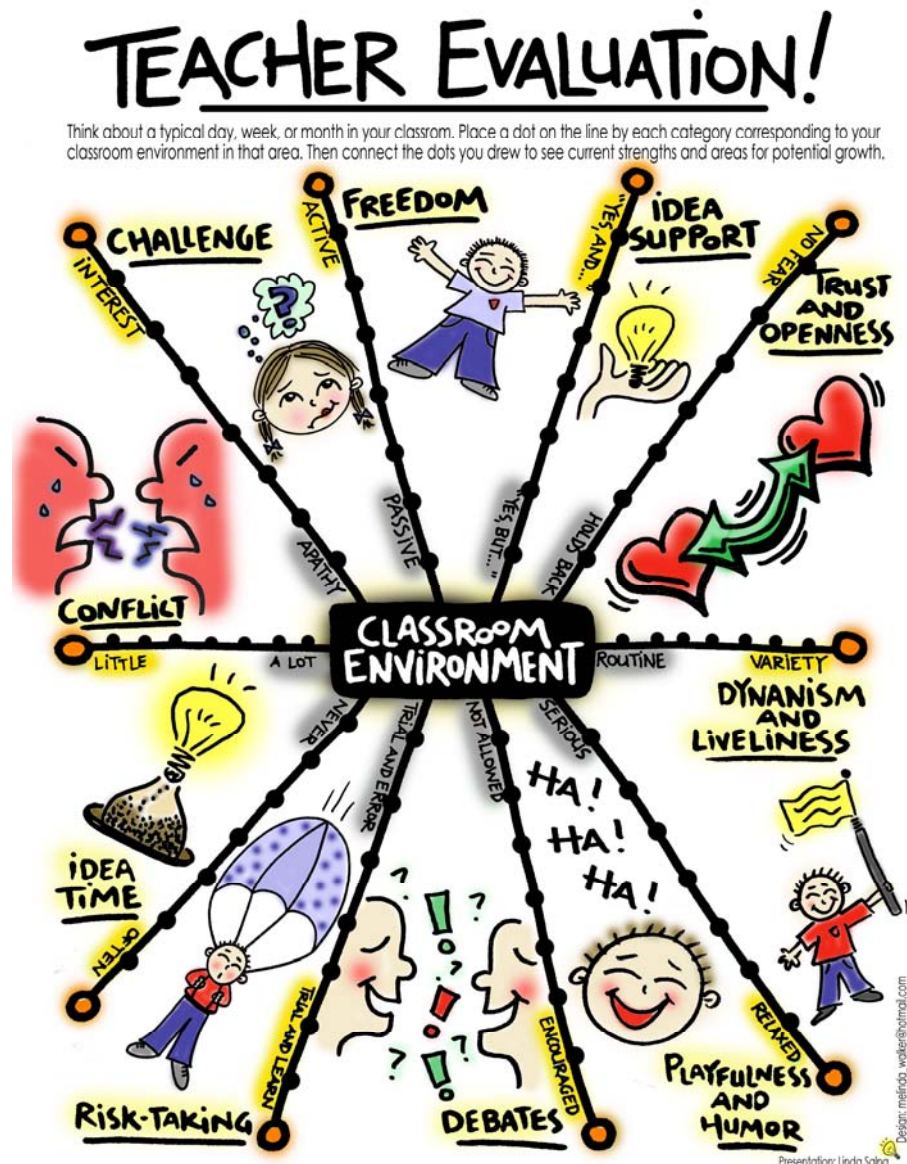


Figure 46. Classroom Environment Evaluation.

Creative Workplace Environment

This led to the adaptation of the Classroom Environment Evaluation to a Workplace Environment Evaluation for two other Supreme cohort members: Erik, to use for an Ekvall training in Europe, and Ginny, in one of her training sessions in Toronto. Figures 47 & 48 show this image in action at Erik's session.

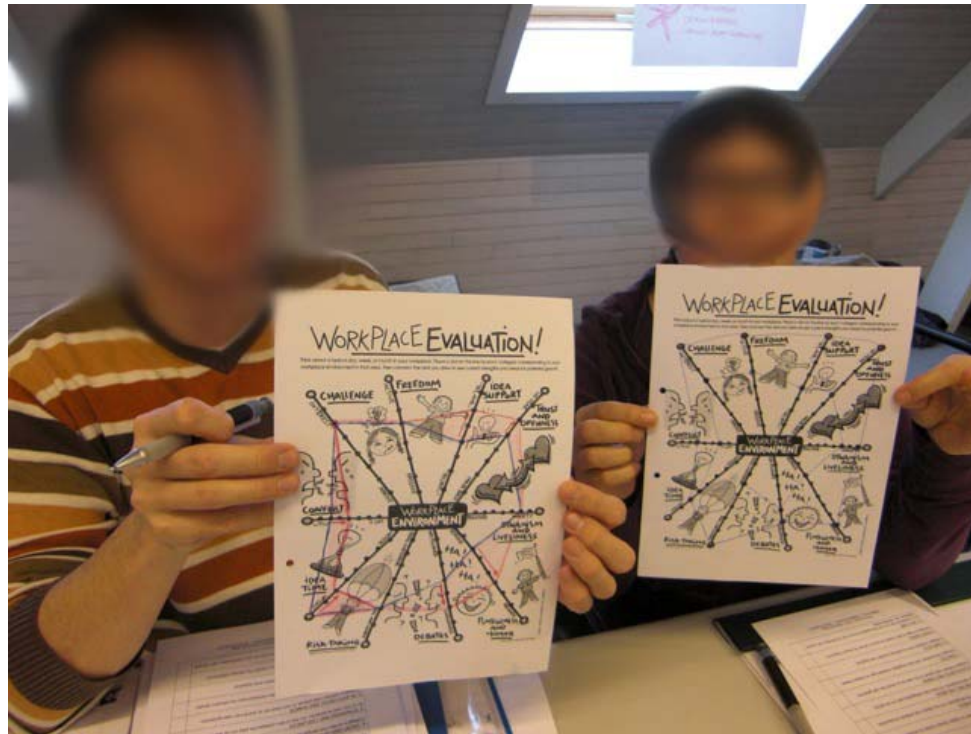







Figure 47. Workplace Environment Evaluation.



Figure 48. Workplace Environment Evaluation Discussion.

Book Evaluation Matrix

Another collaboration with Linda, Figure 49 shows a book evaluation form to help elementary kids choose a good book to read. Figure 50 shows the matrix in action in the classroom.

 WHICH BOOK SHOULD I READ?	Curious George	Madeline	Winnie the Pooh	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
Does it have at least 50 pages?				
Does it look interesting?				
Do you need help with more than 3 words per page?				
Have you or someone else read it to you before?				

Name: _____

Presented by Linda Solina
Designed by Melinda Walker

Figure 49. Book Evaluation Matrix for Elementary Children.

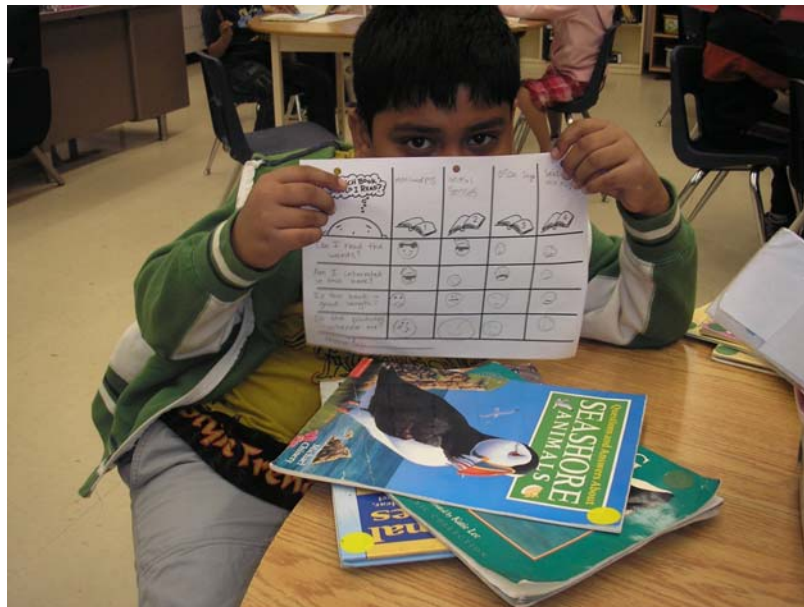


Figure 50. Book Evaluation Matrix Used by Student.

Ideas and Choices Posters

Another collaboration with Linda, this one with posters for teachers of convergent and divergent thinking rules, shown in Figures 51 & 52. Figures 53 & 54 show the poster in use in the classroom.



Figure 51. Choices: Convergent Thinking Rules.



Figure 52. Ideas: Divergent Thinking Rules.



Figure 53. Ideas Rules Poster in Classroom



Figure 54. Laminated Ideas Poster

Idea box

Another in a series of collaborative efforts with my SBP, Linda, an idea box template for elementary grades (Figure 55). The idea box is based on the morphological analysis technique by Dr. Fritz Zwicky (Osborn, 1953). The main components of the problem are listed in the large color blocks at the top, then ideas for each topic are record under each. Idea boxes can generate a very large number of ideas fairly quickly and have a multitude of applications. Figures 56 shows an idea box used for story plots.

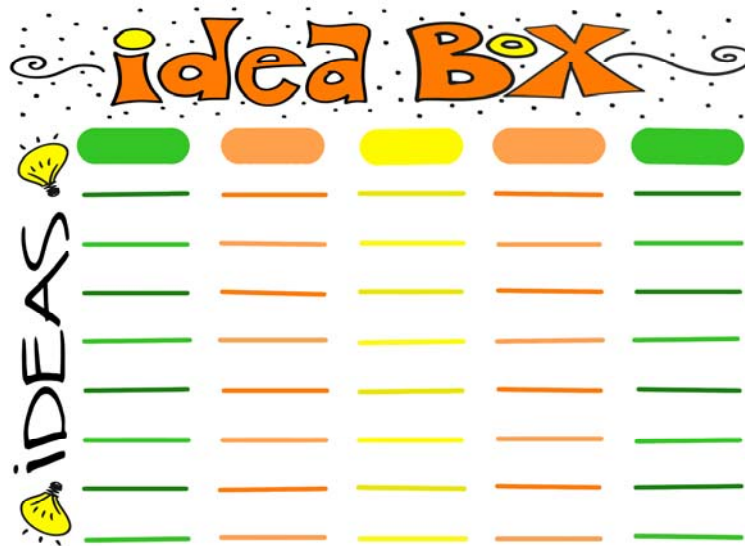


Figure 55. Idea Box Template.

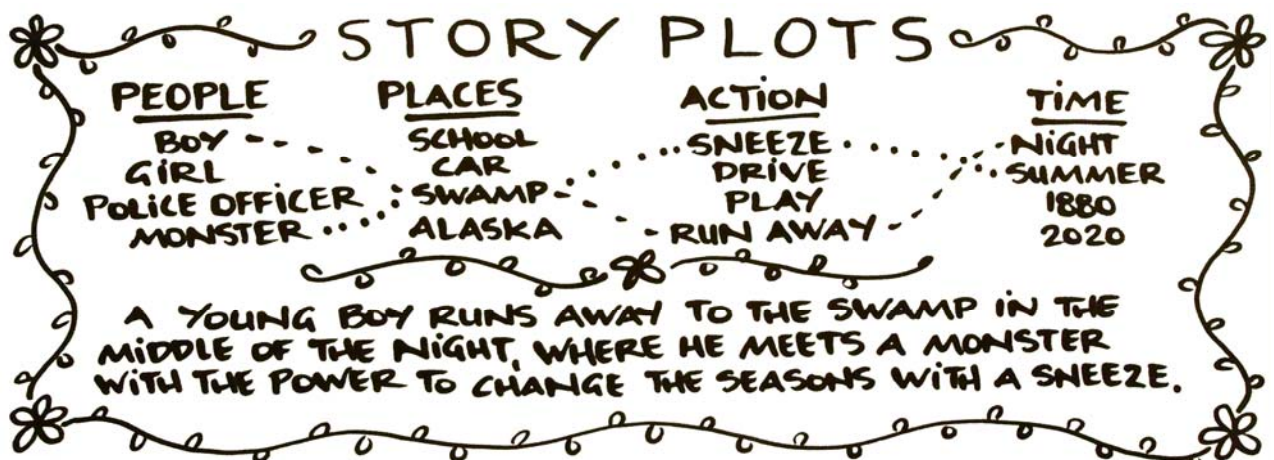


Figure 56. Story Plots Idea Box

SCAMPER

Yet another collaboration with Linda, two different versions of SCAMPER. Figure 57 shows one to be used as a whole class or with older kids. Figure 58 can be cut apart and each letter used individually, which would be more suitable to younger kids. Figure 59 shows how teachers might use SCAMPER to develop math problems, while Figure 60 shows how teachers might use SCAMPER to resolve classroom issues or help students resolve problems. SCAMPER is a divergent thinking tool originally developed by Alex Osborn (1953).

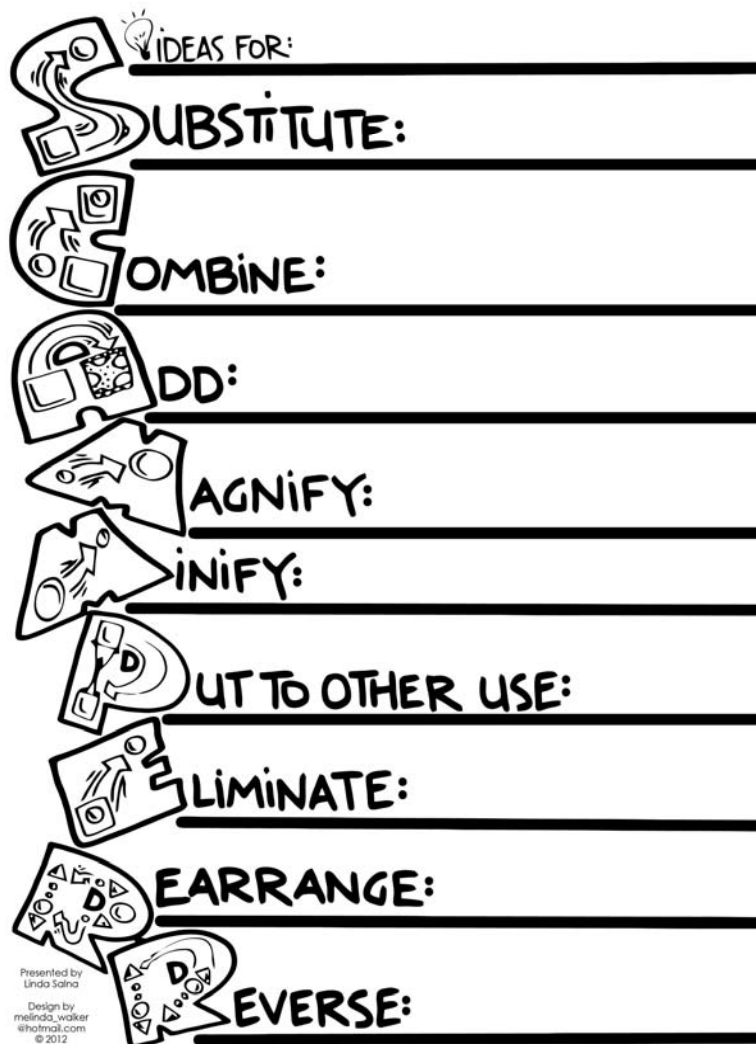


Figure 57. SCAMPER Template 1.



Figure 58. SCAMPER Template 2.



Figure 59. SCAMPER Example 1.



Figure 60. SCAMPER Example 2.

Idea System

As a very high ideator, ideas are always racing through my mind. More often than not, each new idea leads to a number more and so they continue to grow. Knowing this, it was imperative for me to develop a way of recording, organizing, and tracking my ideas for the duration of this project. I am delighted to say I not only developed a system that worked wonderfully for this project, but one I will use for other projects too, both personally and professionally. I call it the Stickydoodle book and I am totally stuck on it! See Figure 61.



Figure 61. My Stickydoodle Book of Ideas.

The Stickydoodle book (Figures 62-64) is simply a plain spiral-bound sketchbook divided into three main sections: Skill development, business development, and actions taken. The skills section is covered with pink sticky notes and the business section is filled with green sticky notes. This allows me to quickly organize and color-code ideas as they are recorded. When in need of a new skill or business development step, I simply look through the ideas and mark the ones I can see myself doing soon with a little sticker. Then I choose one or two ideas from both sections and stick them in my workspace. Completed ideas are moved to the end of the book in the “actions taken” section.



Figure 62. Stickydoodle Book: Skills



Figure 63. Stickydoodle Book: Business



Figure 64. Stickydoodle Book: Actions Taken

Additional Thoughts

From the TCS exercises, skype sketchnotes, and collaborative classroom materials to my Sticklydoodle book idea system, I feel my outcomes far exceeded my expectations. I was born a very high ideator, a very visual, tactile, and kinesthetic one at that, with high implementer tendencies, and I believe my innate foresight preferences are clearly evident in these outcomes. In fact, both the skills and business sections of my idea system were filled up in the first few weeks! Some ideas did not even make it into the book because I was ready to implement them immediately. After getting all of my ideas (at least a great deal of them) down on paper, my mind was clear to focus on implementing as many of my “superstar” ideas as possible.

What is not immediately evident is the role visual thinking played in my idea system. My intent was to stick my “superstar” ideas in my workspace, move them to the “actions taken” section of my Sticklydoodle book when completed, then chose more ideas from the book to stick in my workspace. Instead, the intuitive implementer in me took over and I stuck most of my “superstar” ideas directly in the “actions taken” section of my book. Even with a system in place to help me progress one step at a time, I intuitively and instinctually put the steps together to form the big picture first. Ironically, a tactile, visual reminder of the big picture was unnecessary.

In reviewing my ideas in search of the “superstars”, I realized I naturally visualized each one. The ideas that produced strong, vivid, rich, and colorful images in my mind’s eye are the ones I implemented. And because the images were so vivid, I easily remembered them. Thus, the outcomes of this project are a direct result of my innate preferences for and strengths in ideation, implementation, and visual thinking.

SECTION 5: KEY LEARNINGS

Along with further development of my visual thinking knowledge and skills, a key goal of this project was to get a clearer picture of my potential as a visual practitioner. Thanks to all the fabulous folks who offered their feedback, I now know my original hunch about this field being a perfect match for my skills, talents, experiences, and interests was spot on. Although I did not know exactly how this project might unfold at the start, I was certain this was the right direction for me. Thus my overall big insight is this: Ambiguity can be deadly when you do not know or care where you are going; when you do, ambiguity suddenly is not that big of a deal. It becomes secondary to the goal.

Below are a few of the key learnings from individual parts of the project.

That Creative Space

I have my own graphic style, one that is very strong, distinctive, whimsical, and full of movement. Seeing my work alongside others makes this very clear. As one of the TCS instructors so aptly put it, “Conversations do not conform to templates”. Nor do people or creative activities. Style is the ability to play with the templates and status quos until they conform to you. Beyond merely the look, style creates the feel and personality of the image, and is one of the biggest determining factors in who clients decide to hire. Thus having a distinctive yet flexible style is very important in this line of work.

Collaboration

Collaboration gives me energy. I enjoy working with positive, enthusiastic people and hope to join forces with Supreme cohort members, as well as those in the field of creativity, in the future. Although, I also like working alone and know balance is key.

Idea System

Organized ideating is the way to go. My Stickydoodle books not only make things neater, but allow me to quickly find ideas I have recorded. I can see many other applications for this format as well, and will definitely continue to keep track of things and possibly even present information in this way.



Figure 65 shows the other half of my idea system. It is called the Stickydoodle book two: Super sticky stuff! This is where I record and keep insights and things I have learned. It is not a book of things to do per say, rather things to remember. Figure 66 shows some of the “super sticky stuff” I learned during this project.

Figure 65. Stickydoodle Book Two: Super Sticky Stuff!



Figure 66. Super Sticky Stuff.

Dashboards

Named after the dashboard of a car, performance dashboards offer a visual means to track progress. They offer immediate feedback as to how far one has come and can also show how far until the desired goal is reached (Puccio et. al., 2010). As a very visual thinker, I love these. Here is the lowdown on the four I used:

Eight Hours of Sleep

When I work at night, I often lose track of time. Before I know it, it is past midnight. Having this dashboard around was an effective reminder to go to bed when I'm tired. If I had not put a dot on the dashboard a couple of days in a row, then I knew getting to bed earlier had to be a priority. Getting enough sleep makes me much more productive (Figure 67).



Figure 67. Sleep Dashboard.

Daily Stretch

After having this dashboard around for a couple of days, it quickly became a habit to stretch multiple times a day. It now serves as a reminder, with no need to track my progress any more. Stretching is essential to keep my muscles free of knots that make it hard to draw smooth lines. (Figure 68).

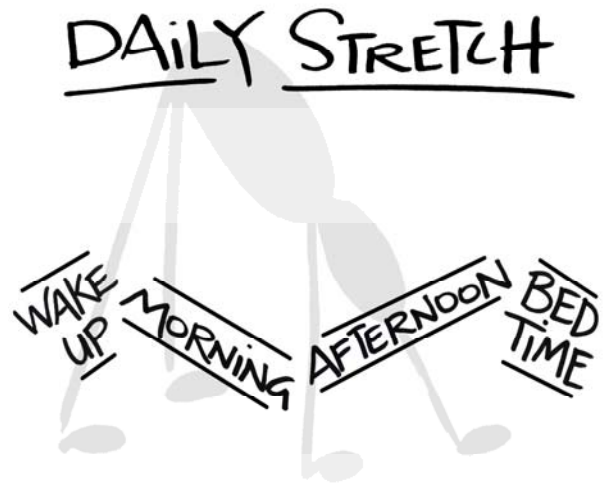


Figure 68. Daily Stretch Dashboard.

Visualize

I realized for Figure 69 to be effective it needs to be much more specific. I visualize a lot, especially while creating anything visual. What exactly do I want to visualize? What am I working on? Those are the questions I need to answer before I can even begin to track my progress. “Visualize” is just too vague.

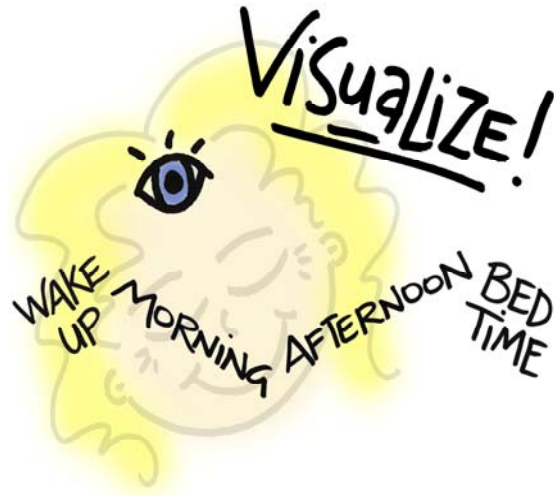


Figure 69. Visualize Dashboard.

Twitter

I am not a big fan of social media but realize it can be a very powerful marketing and networking tool for business. To experiment with Twitter, I made the goal of 100 tweets during this project (Figure 70). The tweets consisted of quotes from creativity literature I marked while reading. With the help of [timely.is](#), I exceeded my goal. Recording tweets when I found them and having them automatically sent as I had scheduled, without the need to log in or even be online, made this very easy. However, I lost 7 out of 23 followers while posting regularly. Interestingly enough, after a week of no tweets, I gained three new followers. Perhaps less really is more when tweeting.

This experiment showed me there are tools out there to make social media more manageable, less time consuming, and just all around easier to keep up with. It also showed me there is definitely an art to using it successfully for anything other than fun. This is something I need to dig into deeper in the near future. In fact, this is one of my first action steps beyond this project.

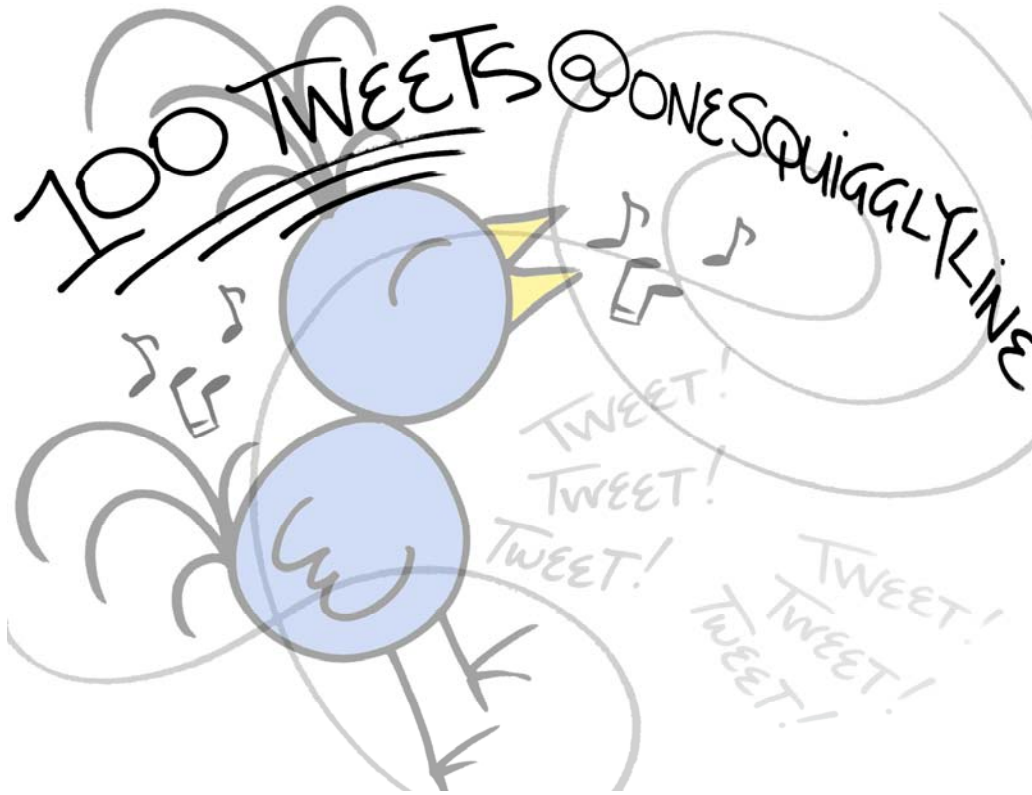


Figure 70. Twitter Dashboard.

Speed and Accuracy

This field is not about creating great works of art that will hang on gallery walls for centuries to come. This is why I chose to focus on impact, value, and professionalism: Impact catches the viewer's attention and draws them into the content; value keeps the viewer engaged and creates the feeling that it was well worth the time it took to look at the image; and professionalism lends credibility to the image.

One of the things I love about this field is the quick, sketchy, fluid feel of the work. It is not about perfection, but communication. Sometimes, this means images are less than perfect, but that does not make them bad. It merely makes them more human and personable. And in a highly technologically driven society, human and personable, along with distinctive style, are enough to make one stand out in the crowd.

Creativity in Education

As mentioned previously, my original intent when entering this program was to make learning fun for kids. Then, I envisioned my project would focus on the creation of products to foster creativity in elementary classrooms and training teachers how to use them. Ironically, that is exactly what my SBP Linda set out to do with her project. As a credentialed teacher with many years experience with pre-school through eight grade art classes, I was eager and grateful to design products for her to use and brainstorm the variety of ways teachers might work with them in their classrooms.

My ultimate vision when entering the teaching profession was much the same as my initial vision for this project: To create educational products for elementary classrooms and teachers that foster creativity. Although I love working with kids, I thoroughly enjoy designing materials that ignite curiosity, require and develop whole-brain thinking, and make learning fun. This is an area where I excel and would like to explore further.

My background in art and education, teaching experience, new found knowledge about visual thinking, and Master of Science in creativity, innovation, and change leadership form a very solid ground of applicable domain knowledge. Combined with my strong ideational tendencies and child-friendly style, I believe this would be an excellent area to apply my visual thinking knowledge and skills. And it excites me.

In his book *Let Your Life Speak*, Parker Palmer (2000) states, “Vocation at its deepest level is, “This is something I can’t not do, for reasons I’m unable to explain to anyone else and don’t fully understand myself but that are nonetheless compelling.” (p. 25)

Designing and creating things for children seems to be one of the things I “can’t not do.” (See appendix F-H for past examples.) I love the energy, enthusiasm, and curiosity

children exude. Palmer (2004) explains, “This energy comes from the soul – the core of pure being that children are so intimate with – that is, as the poet Rumi says, “here for its own joy.” (p. 14)

I believe this is where real creativity takes place, where the most creative thinking and problem solving come to life. I now understand why my very child-like style is not only applicable, but beneficial to adults as well, and that is most encouraging.

I have a much greater understanding of why this is so, as well as the research and personal experience to back it up, and would like to empower others with what I have learned. Visual thinking is such a powerful learning tool and an easy way to encourage a more playful learning attitude in the classroom and in the students themselves. Also, visual thinking is another thing I “can’t not do”.

Figure 71 briefly describes my discovery of visual thinking. I believe discovering the power of pictures at such a young age has resulted in my ability and desire to create visually engaging products for children. (See Appendix I for slides of the entire animation intended to be used on my future website as an introduction to visual thinking.) It also provided a framework for my work as an art teacher and a very effective and engaging way to connect with children. Deeper conversations and class discussion emerged with the use of pictures, including pictures in my preschool through eighth graders imaginations. I believe heightened curiosity and deeper understanding of the world at large, as well as fellow classmates, was a key factor in the positive, cooperative, collaborative environment of my classes. This is desirable in any classroom. Beyond this project, I will investigate the publication or marketing of educational products I have created, with the hope more teachers will harness the power of visual thinking.



Figure 71. My Discovery of Visual Thinking.

Plan vs. Reality

George Bernard Shaw is reported to have said, “Progress is impossible without change; and those who cannot change their minds, cannot change anything.” Considering the number of times I changed my mind during this project and the amount of progress it produced, it seems the reverse is true as well: Those who can change their minds can change anything for the better.

My changes were far from random or unfocused, due to a lack of commitment to my goals. Rather, it was the clarity and certainty of my goals that allowed me to recognize unforeseen opportunities as they arose and evaluate their potential to lead me closer to them. Intuitively and intellectually, I knew these collaborative opportunities were not only something I wanted to do, but something I could not possibly pass by. Had I not been flexible enough to veer from my original plan, the experience would have been nowhere near as rich. My progress and enthusiasm would have suffered as well.

Once into the work, I realized some things required more or less time than I had originally thought, and so veered from my initial time estimates. Despite these changes, or perhaps because of them, I was able to produce much more than anticipated in the duration of this project. I am quite happy with the results, as they led much closer to my goals than expected. Although some changes required far greater time commitment than anticipated, I now have a much clearer picture of time requirements for some types of work I hope to do as a professional visual practitioner.

Figure 72 shows the difference between my initial time estimation in my process plan (detailed in Section 3 and Appendix A) and the actual outcomes.

VISUAL THINKING:

SKETCHING MY FUTURE AS A VISUAL PRACTITIONER

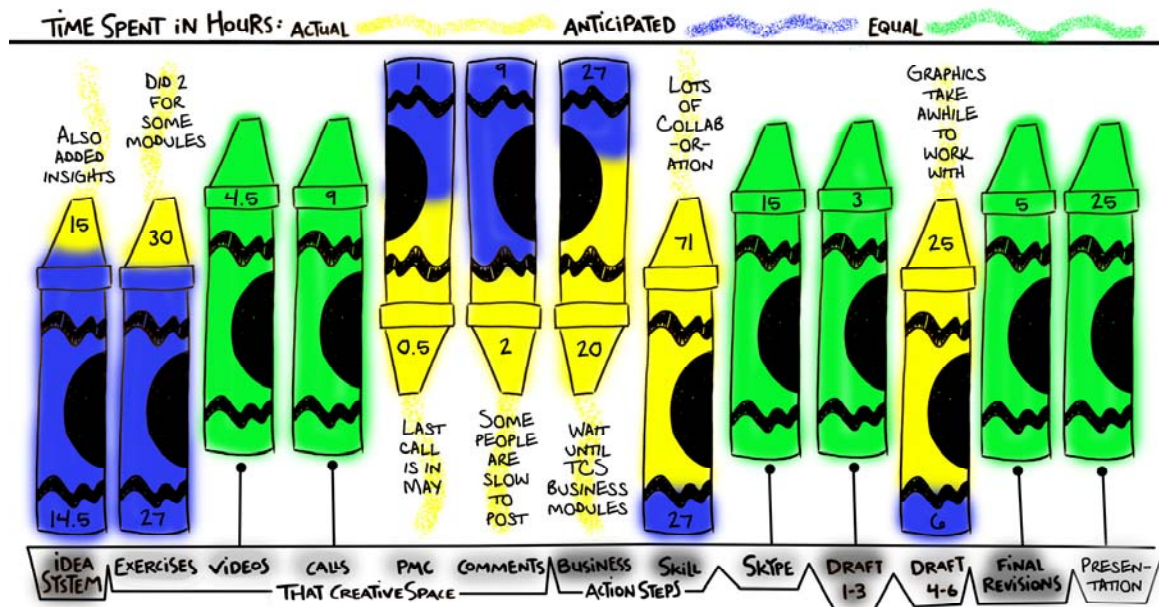


Figure 72. Anticipated vs. Actual Outcomes.

SECTION 6: CONCLUSIONS

Ansel Adams said, “There is nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept.”

I carried this quote with me to Buffalo last June and it has stuck with me ever since.

Although spoken in reference to photography, these words also apply to the creative process. The need for clarity is equally important when shooting a photograph as it is in any creative endeavor. The fact Clarification is foundational to the Creative Problem Solving process confirms this to be true. The Foursight assessment confirms this as well, asserting some people are blessed with the natural tendency to seek clarification in order to solve problems (Puccio et al., 2010). I am not among that group. In fact, clarification is my weakness.

As a super high ideator with strong implementer tendencies, my usual problem solving tactic is to generate a lot of ideas until I find one that can be implemented soon. Since developing an idea system (in the form of my Stickydoodle books) to get all those ideas out of my head and organized on paper, I have found clarification to be much easier. Patterns, repeats, and relations emerge just by flipping through the books and the clarification process almost takes care of itself. Best of all, this clarification naturally emerges from using my innate preferences and strengths for ideation, implementation, and visual thinking.

This realization causes me to wonder if one’s Foursight profile really provides far more than an overview of one’s problem solving preferences and strengths; I believe it also serves as an indicator to one’s problem solving needs. In contrast to Maslow’s famous hierarchy of needs, in which everyone shares the same basic ones (such as food, clothing, and water), a Foursight profile offers a much more individualized hierarchy of

one's problem solving needs. As a very strong ideator and fairly strong implementer, clarity only emerges after I clear away the big jumble of ideas and start moving. Then, I am free to develop an idea more fully. Sometimes, however, clarity emerges in the process of developing. Either way, this pattern fits my Foursight profile of a very high ideator, fairly strong implementer, and very weak clarifier and developer. And, as I discovered in the course of this project, ideation and implementation are essential needs in my quest for clarity.

At first, I thought this need to begin with ideation emerged because I enjoy it and it comes easily to me; it is my problem solving safety zone. According to Maslow, everyone needs a safety zone (1954). And "when people feel stressed, of course, they no longer feel safe and are further inhibited in practicing new ways of acting" and thinking (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 163). This is why I think starting with one's Foursight preferences is the key to overcoming, working through, and improving one's Foursight weaknesses. I think this would be a fascinating area for further research.

Although I am not a natural clarifier, clarification is something I truly do seek. In fact, lack of clarity is actually a source of stress for me. As an ideator, I need the big picture and I need it sharply focused. Visual thinking helps greatly in turning fuzzy concepts into a sharp image. Torrance (1979) sheds some light as to why this may be:

Since everything in a drawing is visible at once and must hold together, a high degree of organization is required. Loose and sloppy thinking becomes obvious even to young children...Drawing makes for commitment. A drawing cannot be half one thing and half another. A person has to draw something definite (p. 131).

In her book *The Right Brained Business Plan*, Jennifer Lee advises, “Whenever you feel yourself getting tense or worried about how to answer the more detailed questions, come back to the big vision” (p. 41, 2011). This advice is golden to a non-detail oriented ideator like me. Yet in order to do this effectively, one must know what the big vision is. It must be clear. A fuzzy concept more often than not leads to fuzzy images and fuzzy actions. Crystal clear actions towards a fuzzy goal lead to fuzzy outcomes. This project has made me realize a sharp concept can easily bring fuzzy images into focus, thus leading to sharp, focused actions. As mentioned earlier, ambiguity, or fuzziness, becomes secondary to a clear, passionate goal. I believe this is why tolerance of ambiguity is considered a key trait of creative individuals: They know where they are going even if they do not know exactly how to get there (Puccio et. al., 2010).

I envision the ambiguity of creativity as a squiggly line. One that is fluid and flexible, spontaneous and unique. One that could not be created with a ruler, on the computer, or even with a plan. It is organic, free flowing, and distinctively human. And it is one that yields multiple options when viewed from a variety of perspectives. Figure 72 contains two such squiggly lines. They are the same line, yet one might be seen as an apple and the other a fish, among a multitude of other things, depending on how it is rotated. Figure 73 contains the same two lines combined to create what may be perceived as an hourglass, among other things. Two straight lines, drawn on the computer, provide stark comparison to the variety of options available to both straight and squiggly lines, and thus, certainty and ambiguity. Presented visually, I believe it is much easier to view ambiguity as a plethora of possibilities, options, and choices, as opposed to a big mess of confusion, chaos, and uncertainty that inhibits creative thought and expression.

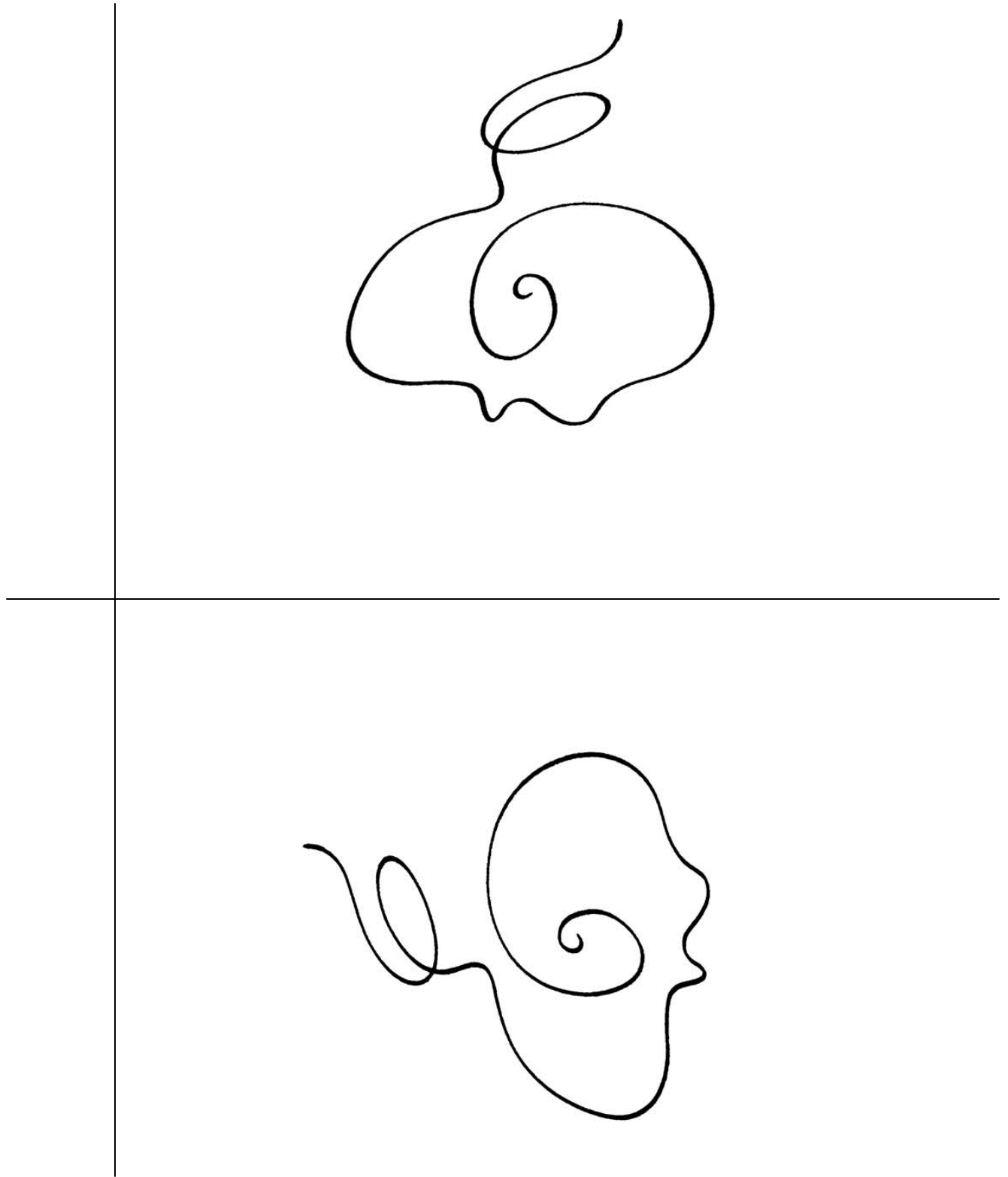


Figure 73. Rotated Squiggly Lines

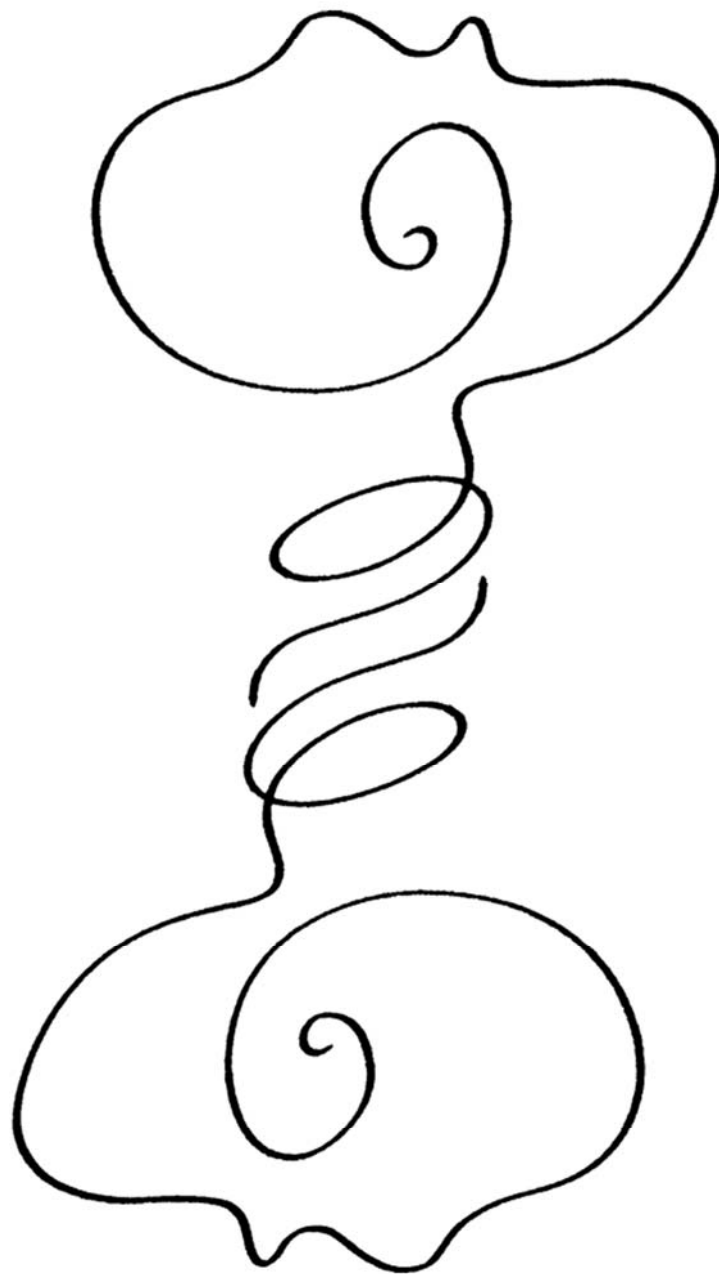


Figure 74. Combined Squiggly Lines

Figure 75 features the number of short, straight lines present in a squiggly line, thus illustrating how small pieces of certainty are present in the midst of ambiguity. I believe this is one of the reasons finding and examining the big picture can be so powerful: Uncertainty and ambiguity experienced in the past fade as the pieces come together to form a very clear picture of all that has lead to the present situation. This can serve as a powerful reminder the ambiguity of today will be a sharply focused piece of the big picture in the future. Perhaps the comfort with ambiguity creative individuals so often experience is due to the realization that ambiguity always resolves itself and the faith that it always will. Instead of lamenting the lack of clarity and certainty, creative individuals actively seek it out, are keenly aware when it appears, and quick to seize it when it does. Visual thinking can help everyone view ambiguity in this way.

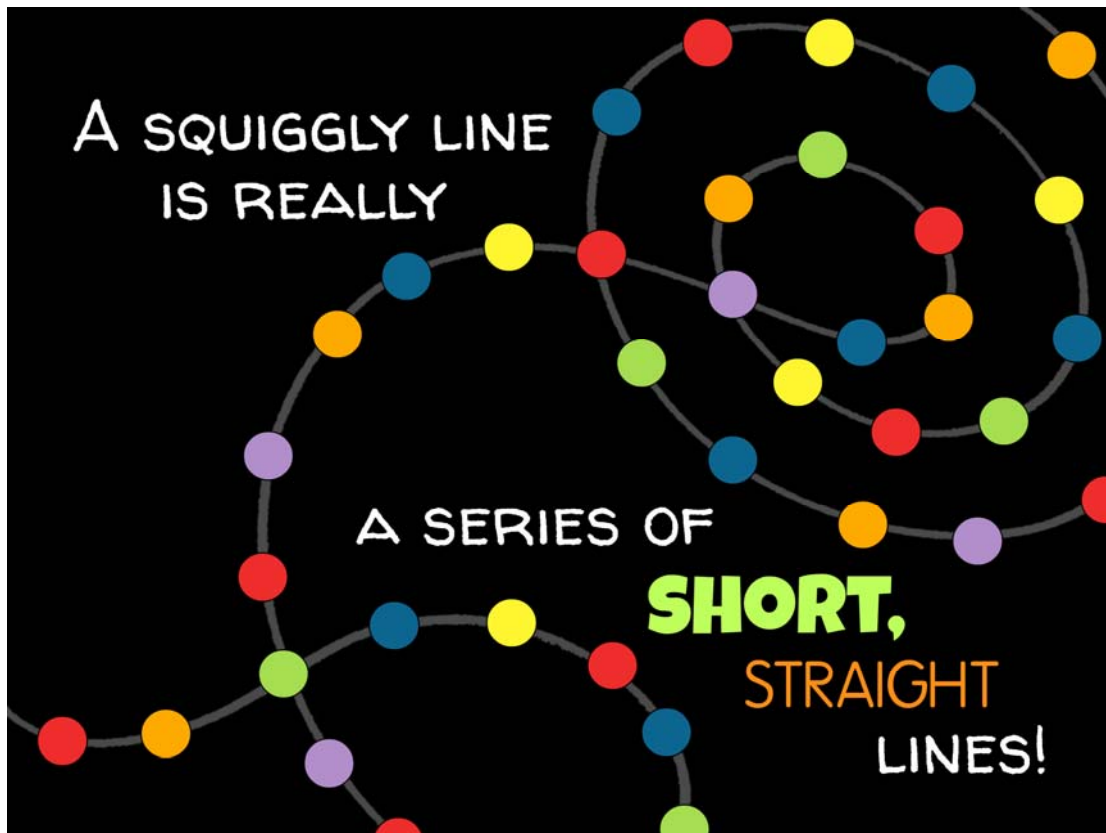


Figure 75. Squiggly Lines Made from Straight Lines.

As the profile for my experimental twitter account states, “The path from where we were to where we are, where we are to where we're going, from here to there & there to here is always a line - make it a fun one!” (@OneSquigglyLine, 2012) Visual thinking has the ability to transform a bunch of tangled, scribbly thoughts into a graceful, fluid, sharply focused picture. Visual thinking plays a central role in clarifying, focusing, and framing the goal, the vision, and the destination. And in my opinion, visual thinking makes the adventure so much more fun. It is something I truly love and, as Torrance advises in his famous *Manifesto to Children*, I intend to pursue with intensity. The following words by Chesterson (2009) flesh out the correlation between adventure and love, and I believe the creative process as well:

An adventure is, by its nature, a thing that comes to us. It is a thing that chooses us, not a thing that we choose. Falling in love has been often regarded as the supreme adventure, the supreme romantic accident. In so much as there is in it something outside ourselves, something of a sort of merry fatalism, this is very true. Love does take us and transfigure and torture us. It does break our hearts with an unbearable beauty, like the unbearable beauty of music. But in so far as we have certainly something to do with the matter; in so far as we are in some sense prepared to fall in love and in some sense jump into it; in so far as we do to some extent choose and to some extent even judge—in all this falling in love is not truly romantic, is not truly adventurous at all. In this degree the supreme adventure is not falling in love. The supreme adventure is being born. (p. 97)

This project has been an excellent start in my journey in visual thinking and the world of visual practitioners, as well as a fabulous adventure in itself. However, the project has

been just that: A start. A start to a project I doubt will ever really end. One that will twist and turn, mold and adapt to whatever comes along that squiggly line of ambiguity, but one that keeps moving just the same. Figure 76 details some of the ways I will keep up the momentum in the next few months.

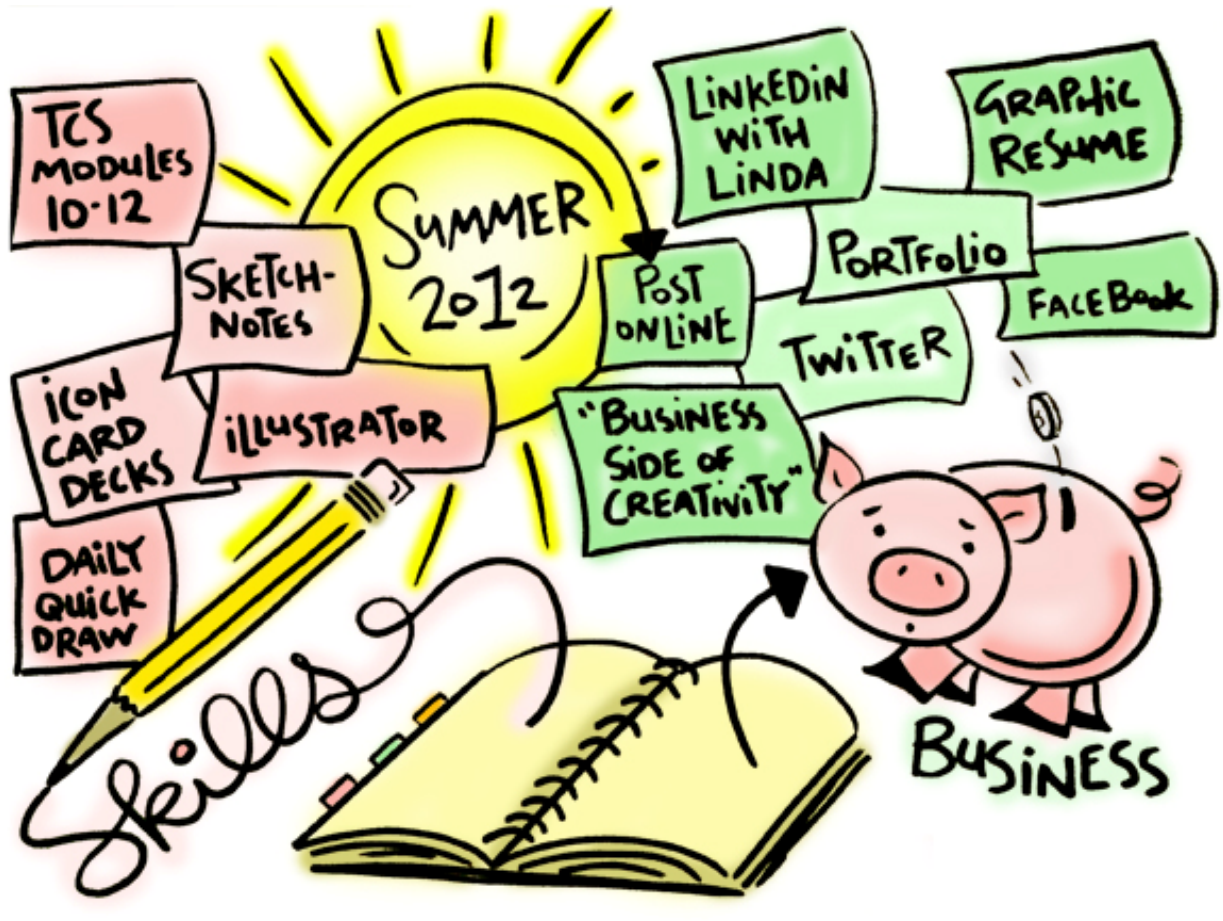


Figure 76. Next Steps.

Goleman et. al. (2002) state, “(Passionate) leadership, however, requires not only a vision, but also a clear picture of the realities you are facing.” (p. 126) The poet William Blake warns of the dangers the lack of clarity can produce, “Life’s dim window of the

soul distorts the heavens from pole to pole, and leads you to believe a lie, when you see with, not through, the eye.” And Fritz tells us,

People can easily generate ideas and visions. Current reality, on the other hand, is not easy for many. Practice objectively observing current tension, the discrepancy between your vision and its relevant current reality, which is essential during the creative process. (p. 299)

Figure 77 contains six slides from a short animation I created to include on my future website. They graphically highlight the power of visuals to provide clarity in the midst of ambiguity, as well as clarity of current reality and future visions. They also illustrate the importance of movement once clarity has emerged. (See Appendix J for slides of the entire animation.)

Helping other see through, not with, the eyes, as Blake so eloquently put it, is a wonderfully powerful gift to give others. While this project started with a fairly clear vision, it has certainly brought some of the realities into greater focus: Current skill level, degree of interest, and knowledge gaps, to name a few. Visual thinking has helped me to see there is a much smaller gap than I thought between my current reality and initial vision: To make learning fun for kids of all ages as an unconsciously skilled creatively contagious visual practitioner, and a Supreme one at that.

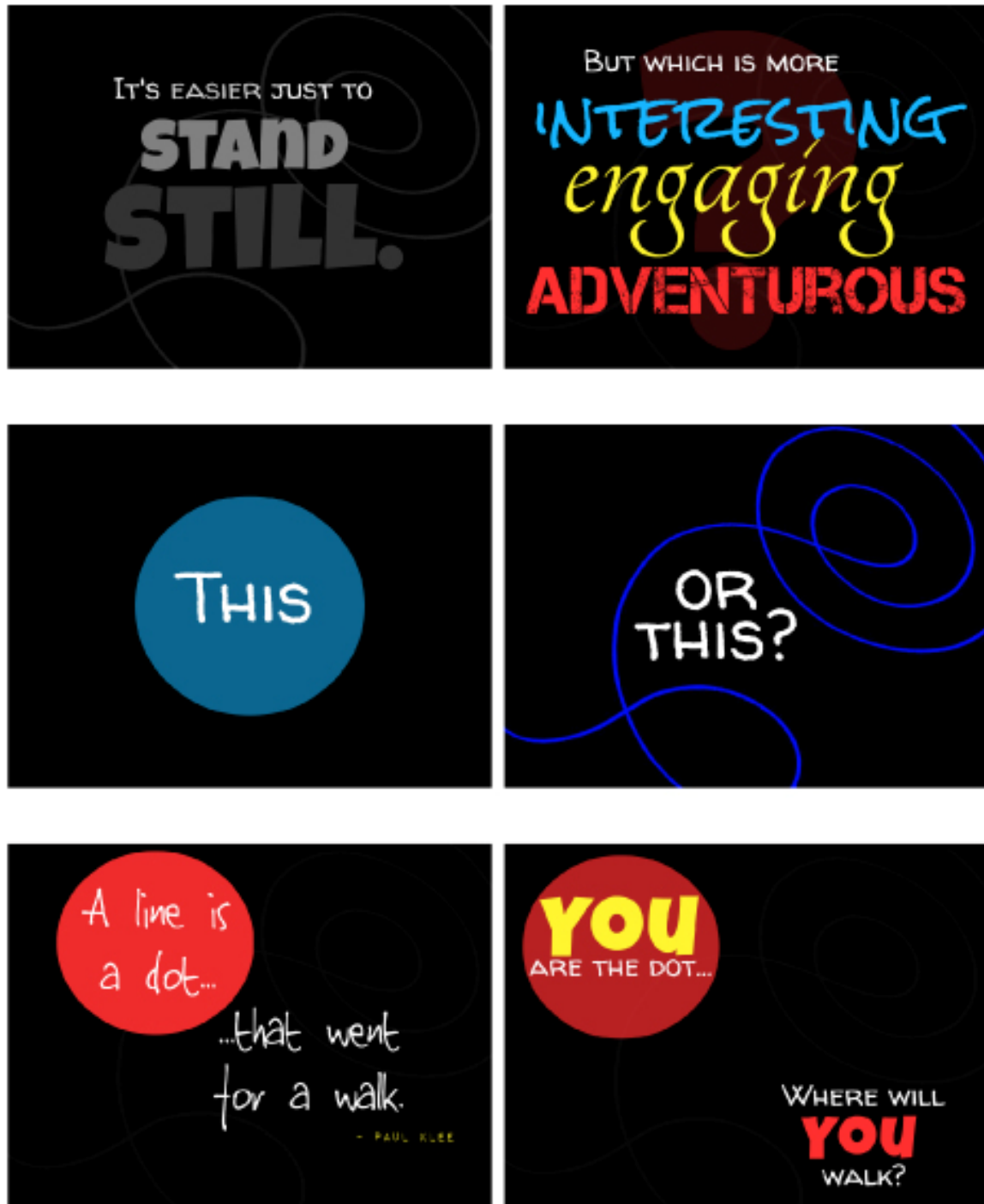


Figure 77. Six Slides to Visually Inspire Movement Despite Ambiguity.

References

- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of seeing*. London, England: Penguin Group.
- Bessemer, S. P. (2006). *Creating products in the age of design: How to improve your new product ideas!*. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press, Inc.
- Chesterton, G. K. (2009). *Heretics*. Rockville, MD: Serenity Publishers, LLC. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?id=A3iYjcXnWkIC&pg=PA97&dq=heretics+chesterton+an+adventure&hl=en&sa=X&ei=WRCXTPoKuGFiALmi6XDDw&ved=0CEQQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Durand, D. & Durand, P. (2011). *That Creative Space*. Thatcreativespace.com
- Ekvall (1996). Organizational climate for creativity and innovation. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5, 105-123.
- Fritz, R. (1991). *Creating: A guide to the creative process*. New York, NY: Fawcett Columbine.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Khatena, J. (1984). *Imagery & creative imagination*. Buffalo, NY: Bearly Unlimited.
- Lee, J. (2011). *The right-brain business plan: A creative, visual map for success*. Novato, CA: New World Library.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Meier, D. (2000). *The accelerated learning handbook*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Osborn, A.F. (1963). *Applied imagination: Principles and procedures of creative problem- solving (3rd revised edition)*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Palmer, P. J. (2000). *Let your life speak: Listening for the voice of vocation*. San

Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Palmer, P. J. (2004). *A hidden wholeness: The journey toward an undivided life*. San

Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Puccio, G. J., Murdock, M. C. & Mance, M. (2010). *Creative leadership: Skills that drive*

Change (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc.

Torrance, E. P. (1979). *The search for satori and creativity*. Buffalo, NY: Creative

Education Foundation.

Torrance, E. P. & Safter, H. T. (1999). *Making the creative leap beyond...* Buffalo, NY:

The Creative Education Foundation.

APPENDIX A

Concept Paper

Running Head: VISUAL THINKING: SKETCHING FUTURE

**Visual Thinking:
Sketching my Future as a Visual Practitioner**

By

Melinda L. Walker

An Abstract of a Project
In
Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Science

Spring 2012

Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

Section One

Purpose and Description of Project

The purpose of this project is to broaden and deepen my preliminary exploration of the development of graphic recording, facilitation, and illustration skills. Exploring ways to develop skill and knowledge relevant to becoming a professional visual practitioner will be a focus of the project. A visual practitioner is one employed in any or all of the following skills as defined: Graphic recording is the act of graphically capturing the essence of a meeting in real-time; Graphic facilitation is the act of facilitating a meeting while graphically capturing the essence, often through the use of templates; Graphic illustration involves graphically capturing the essence of a body of information, whether written or verbal, after the fact. All of these roles are grounded in visual thinking, which is simply the act of thinking in pictures, including those seen in the mind's eye. Figure 1 is an example of a graphic summary of this project.

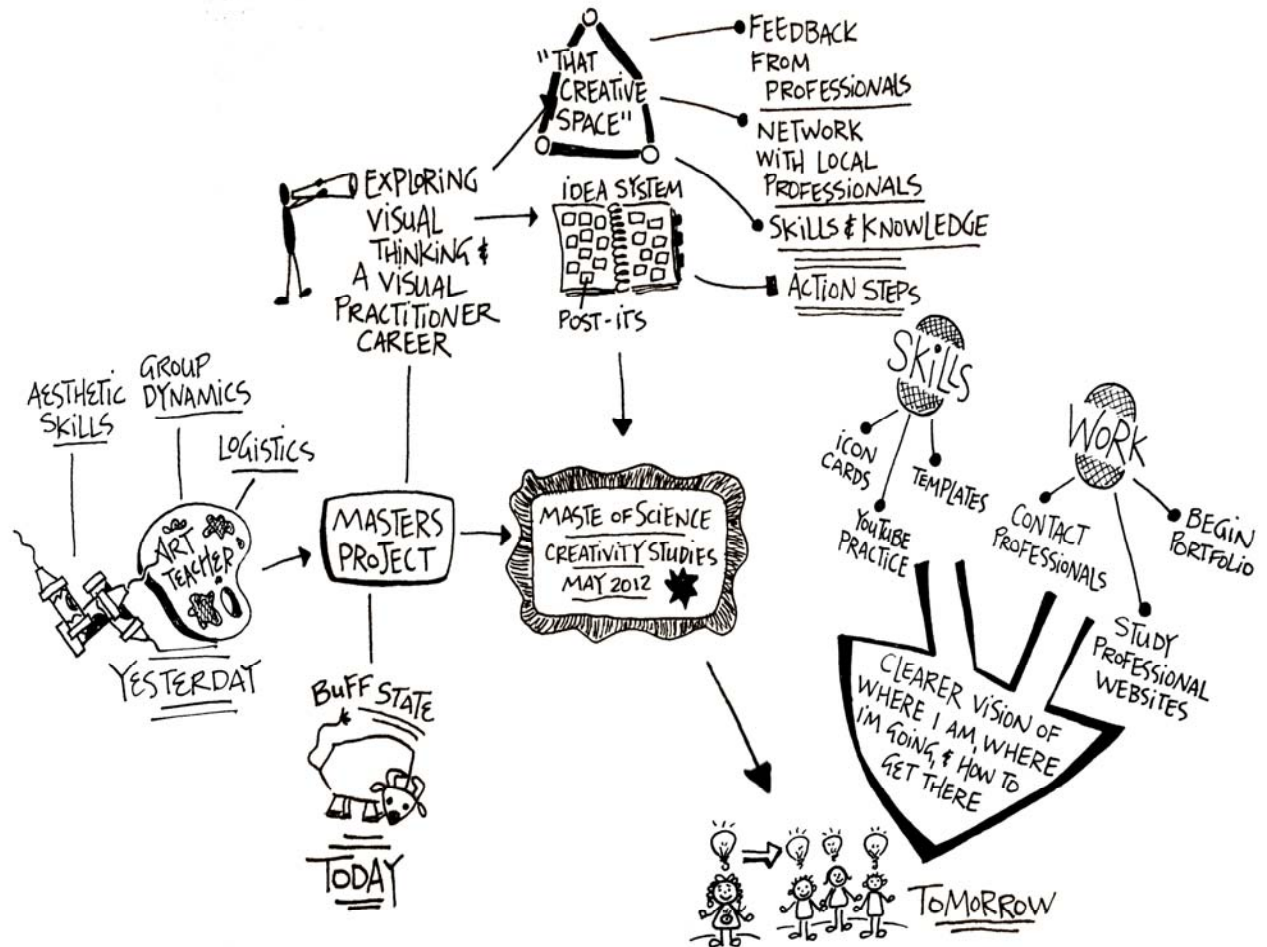


Figure 1. Graphic Summary of Project.

I currently favor graphic illustration, possibly because it is closer to my comfort zone. Through completion of this project, I aim to learn and experience more about graphic facilitation and recording, strengthen my graphic illustration skills, and discover where my strengths and preferences really lie. As a result, I will have a clearer vision of my future as a visual practitioner, creativity expert, and creatively contagious person. Ultimately, I would like to apply these skills to my original goal when entering this

program: To make learning fun for kids. Nearing the completion of this program, I now realize it is more accurate to expand my reach to kids of all ages.

Rationale for Selection

Centuries ago, Aristotle referred to images, not words, as the building blocks of thoughts, insights, and ultimately new ideas (Khatena, 1984). Graphic, visual language transcends time, culture, and language barriers and has been used for centuries to form, as well as communicate, such new found knowledge, insights and ideas (Khatena, 1984). Thanks to our increasingly global and technologically driven world, visuals are thought to be the primary means of communication in the future. Visuals are also the primary language of the brain and have the ability to make abstract information concrete, and thus more readily absorbable and memorable (Khatena, 1984). In fact, people who learned technical information through imagery had 26% better long-term recall than those who did not use imagery (Meier, 2000). In another study, insurance claim adjusters who used imagery to learn a new insurance claim processing procedure scored 400% higher than those who had not used imagery (Meier, 2000).

Torrance considered rich, colorful, and exciting imagery to be foundational to all creativity (1999). Figure 2 illustrates the connections between visual thinking and creativity, including the work of Torrance and components of Creative Problem Solving, while Figure 3 synthesizes the differences between words and images.

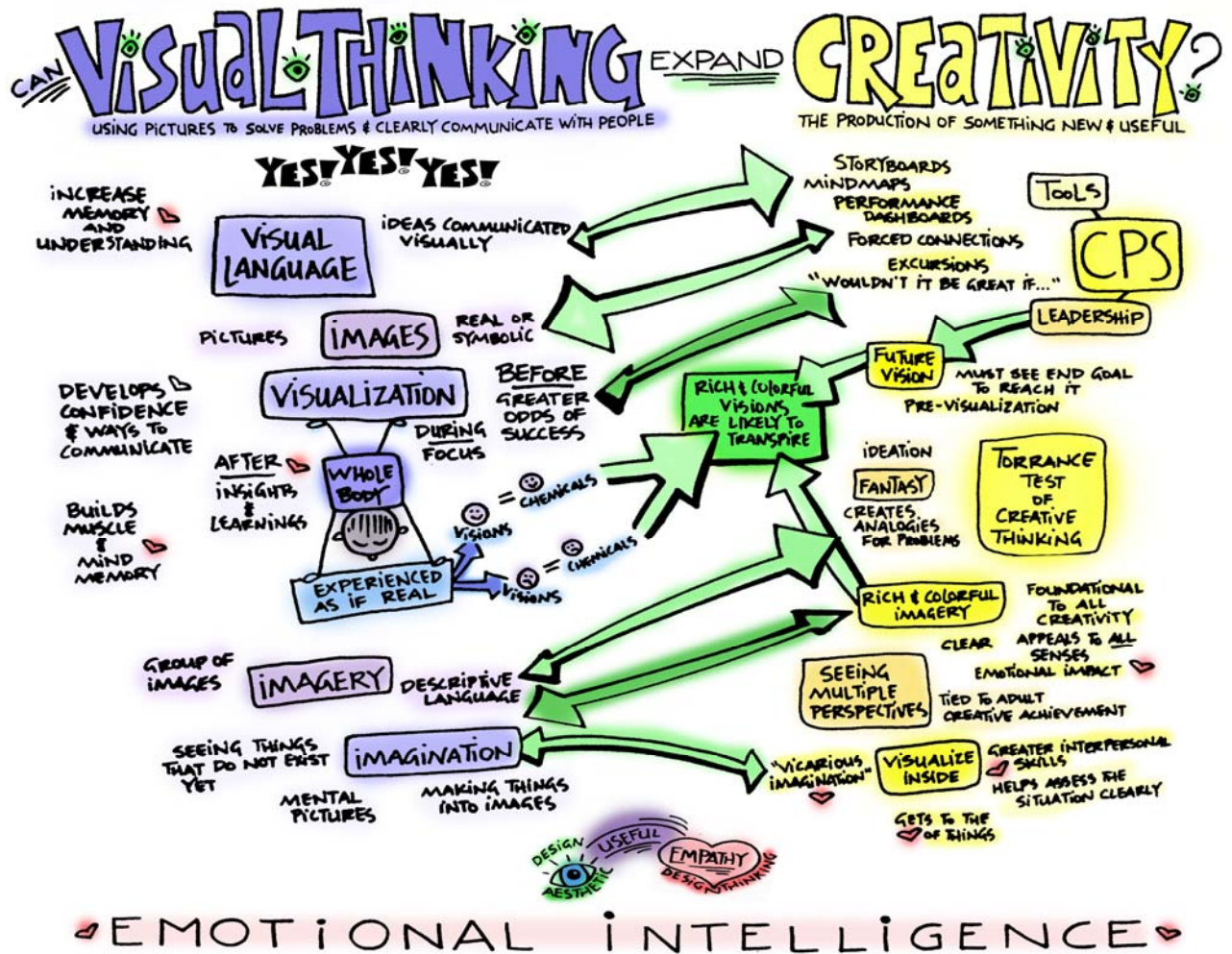


Figure 2. Visual Thinking and Creativity.

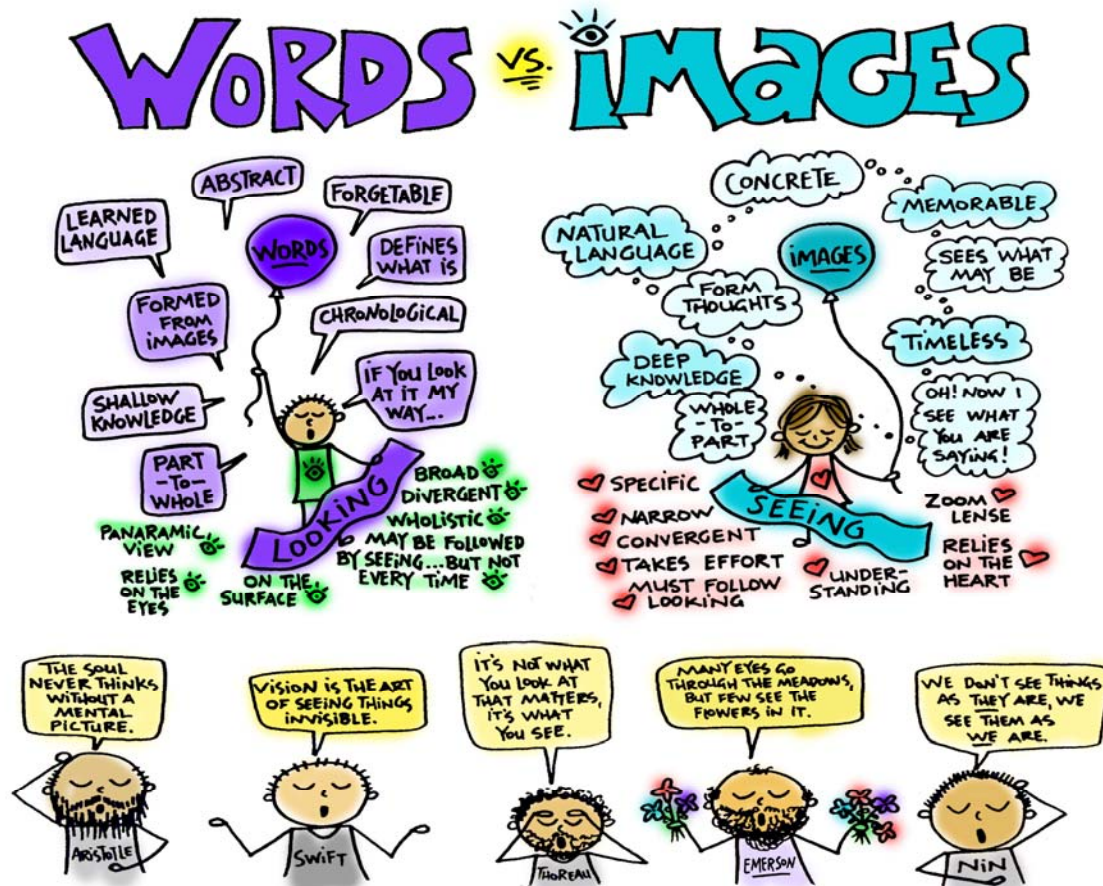


Figure 3. Words and Images.

Although visual practitioners have been around for decades, the demand is growing. However, the field is still somewhat in its infancy and the industry is yet to be represented in statistical employment information. Knowledge of the growing demand for visual practitioners comes directly from those currently employed in the field. These professionals profess the demand for visual practitioners strongly outweighs the number of those qualified to meet them (Durand, D. & Durand, P., 2011). Therefore, skilled practitioners have plenty of options regarding the types of work they choose to take on and the people they work with, and I find this variety and flexibility as appealing as the work itself.

My background in art and love for design form a solid foundation for the visual aspects of this work, while my experience in education applies directly to the logistics and dynamics of group experiences. This leads me to believe there is a high probability I could make a decent income as a visual practitioner. I live in a hot-spot of innovation that is more likely to desire this type of work than more traditional areas, potentially allowing for greater networking and volunteer opportunities to get me started. Also, proficiency as a visual practitioner could serve as a natural segue to teaching or training creativity if I desire and a means to stay deeply connected with those in the field of creativity beyond this program.

Section Two

The field of visual thinking is both broad and deep. So too are the accompanying resources and literature. Since one of the main goals of this project is to move towards employment as a visual practitioner, I have grouped my resources with both the scholarly and professional sides of the field in mind. The resources are not presented here as a connected whole (although there are many links between them), rather a quick and easy go-to guide when questions arise or additional inspiration is needed. This flexible format allows for easy inclusion of additional resources and regrouping.

Because I am a visual thinker and prefer to start with the big picture, my general references are shown graphically in Figure 4, followed by an annotated bibliography of a handful of some of the more influential resources not discussed elsewhere in this paper, which are highlighted in the graphic.

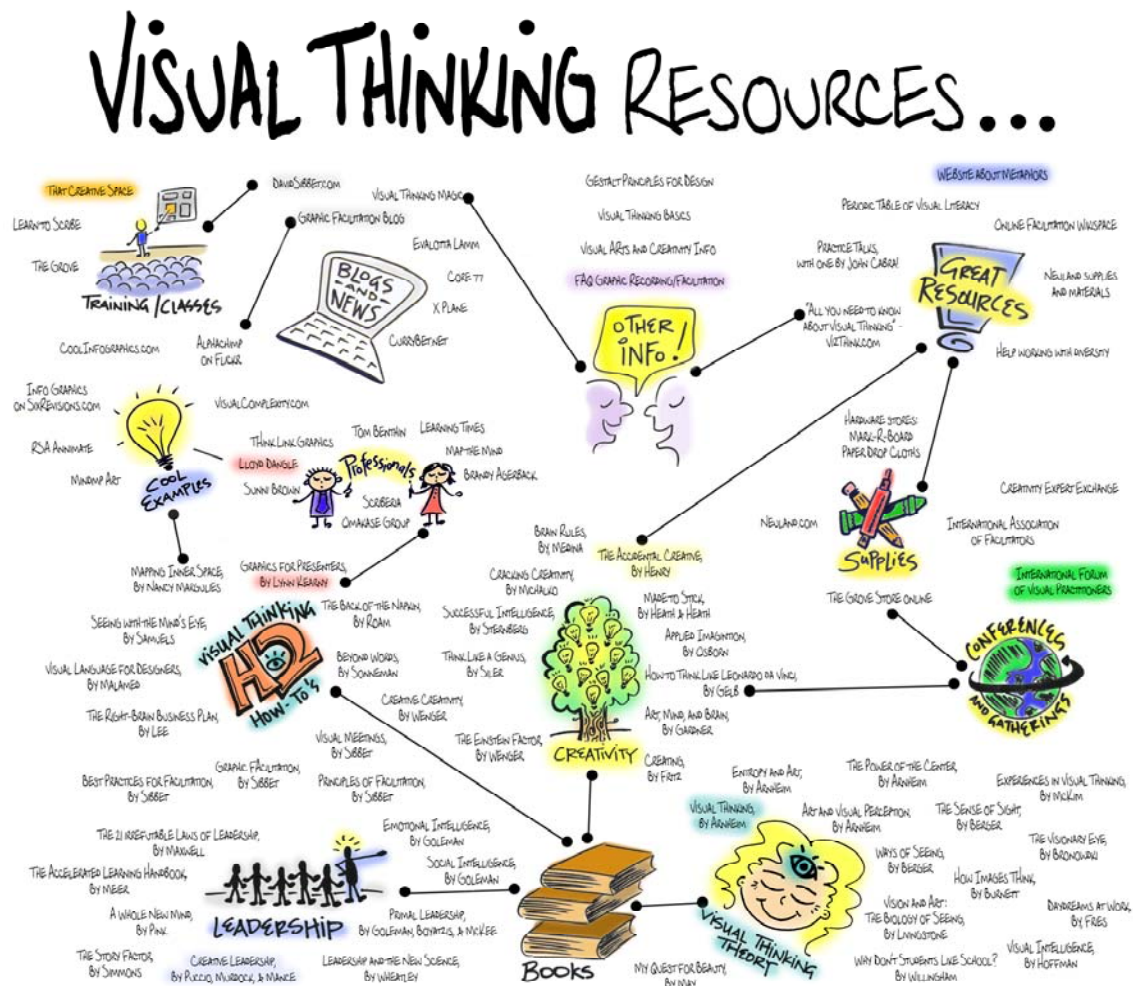


Figure 4. Visual Thinking Resources

Annotated Bibliography

Arnheim, R. (1969). *Visual thinking*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

A pioneer in the field, Arnheim raised awareness of visual thinking well over 40 years ago with the publication of this landmark book. Spanning Plato to computers, Arnheim provides practical tips to enhance the effectiveness of imagery, as well research supporting the role of visuals in our thinking. When faced with skeptical questions or comments about the value of visual practitioners, I will no doubt turn to

this book for smart, scholarly answers that move beyond the sheer aesthetic of images to their effects on our perception and thinking processes.

Casnig, J. D. (1997-2009) *A Language of Metaphors*. Kingston, Ontario, Canada:

Knowgramming.com

One of the TCS modules involves the use of visual metaphors to communicate ideas and solve problems, especially in business settings. This site provides numerous lists, links, and explanations about metaphors, all ripe for inspiration. I figure the more I know about metaphors the better, so I can develop a library of visual metaphors to ensure I am prepared for a variety of topics and situations.

Dangle, L. (2011). Lloydangle.com

Lloyd is the guy responsible for the distinctive graphics used for the American cold remedy, Airborne. His work has appeared in numerous magazines (Cosmopolitan, Time, Shape, Wired, etc.), newspapers (San Francisco Chronicle, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, etc.), book publishers (Avalon Books, Doubleday Mainstreet Books, etc.), and in the corporate world (Federal Express, SB Johnson, etc.). He was also one of the first assigned to graphically record the Republican National Convention, with the results published in The Best American Comics. He is a scheduled workshop leader at IFVP this year and a fellow classmate in TCS. I like the way he calls himself a cartoonist, yet does all types of graphic work, as well as some writing and teaching. I also like his website layout and will no doubt return to it when I am ready for my own.

Durand, D. & Durand, P. (2011). *That Creative Space*. <http://Thatcreativespace.com>

Diane and Peter Durand are both active visual practitioners who have been in

the business for over two decades and are currently developing the online course, ThatCreativeSpace.com (TCS). This course dives into personal, skills, and business development. Topics covered include defining your personal style, various techniques of recording and presenting information, articulating the value of hiring a visual practitioner, and developing your market niche. Supervision, feedback, and mentoring are provided by the Durands throughout the duration of the class. TCS and the Durands are my primary resources for this project and will continue to be through completion of the additional three modules beyond the scope of this project.

Durand, P., Ed. (2012). *The center for graphic facilitation: Ideas, methods, & tools for visual learners*. <http://graphicfacilitation.blogs.com/pages/>

This is the blog for The Center for Graphic Facilitation and is edited by the very same Peter Durand of That Creative Space. Links to practicing graphic facilitators and their locations, quick tips and tricks, links to upcoming networking and training opportunities, and pretty much everything else related to graphic facilitation is included on this blog. Definitely a place to keep informed and connected to the profession and the people involved with it.

Henry, T. (2011). *The accidental creative: How to be brilliant at a moment's notice*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

I discovered Todd Henry's blog (theaccidentalcreative.com) years back and was hooked, so I was eager to read his book as soon as it was published last year. A graphic summary is shown in Figure 5, links to current creativity research are graphically represented in Figure 6, and my personal reactions after reading it are graphically recorded in Figure 7.

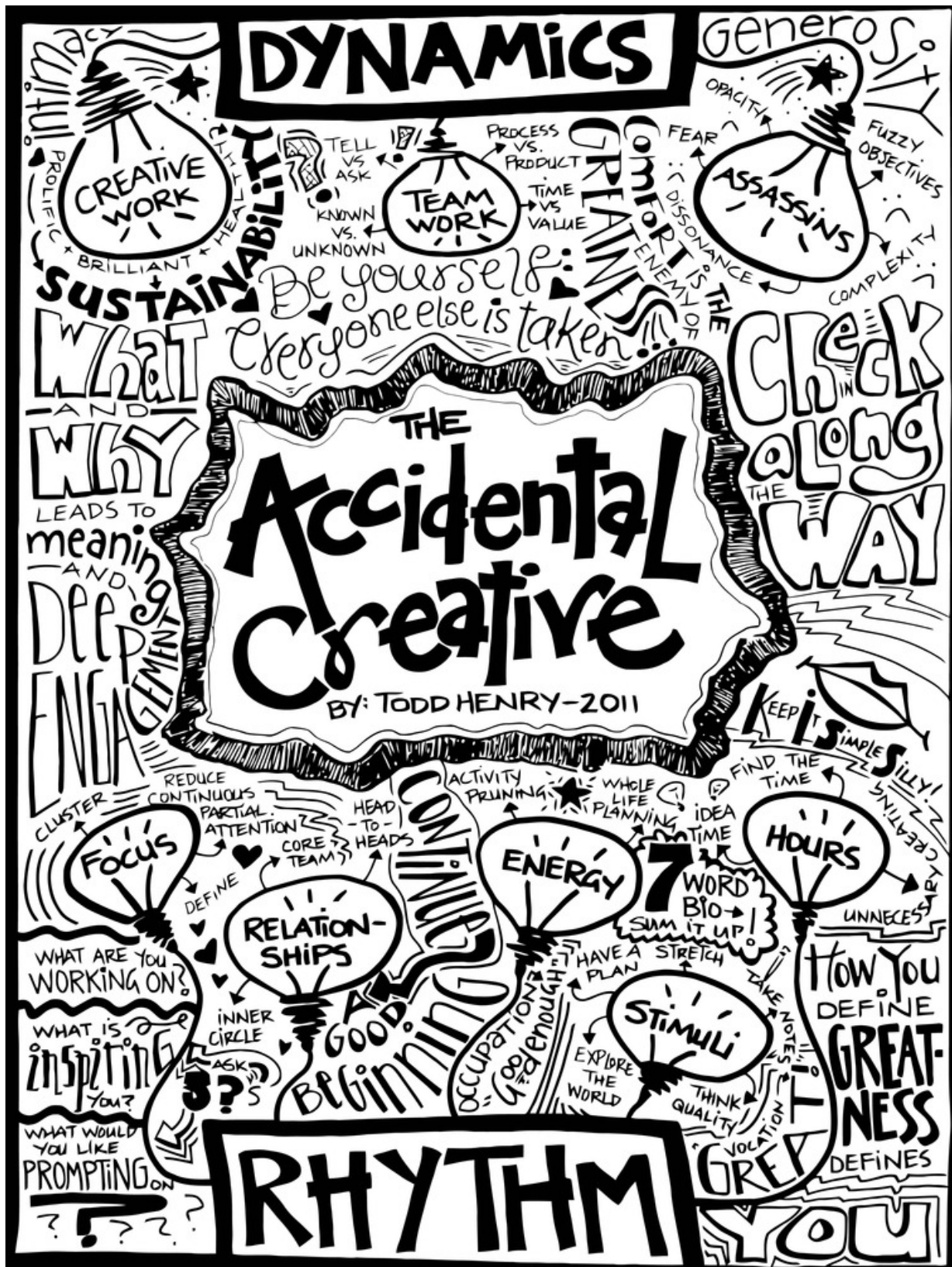


Figure 5. Graphic Summary of *The Accidental Creative*, by Todd Henry.



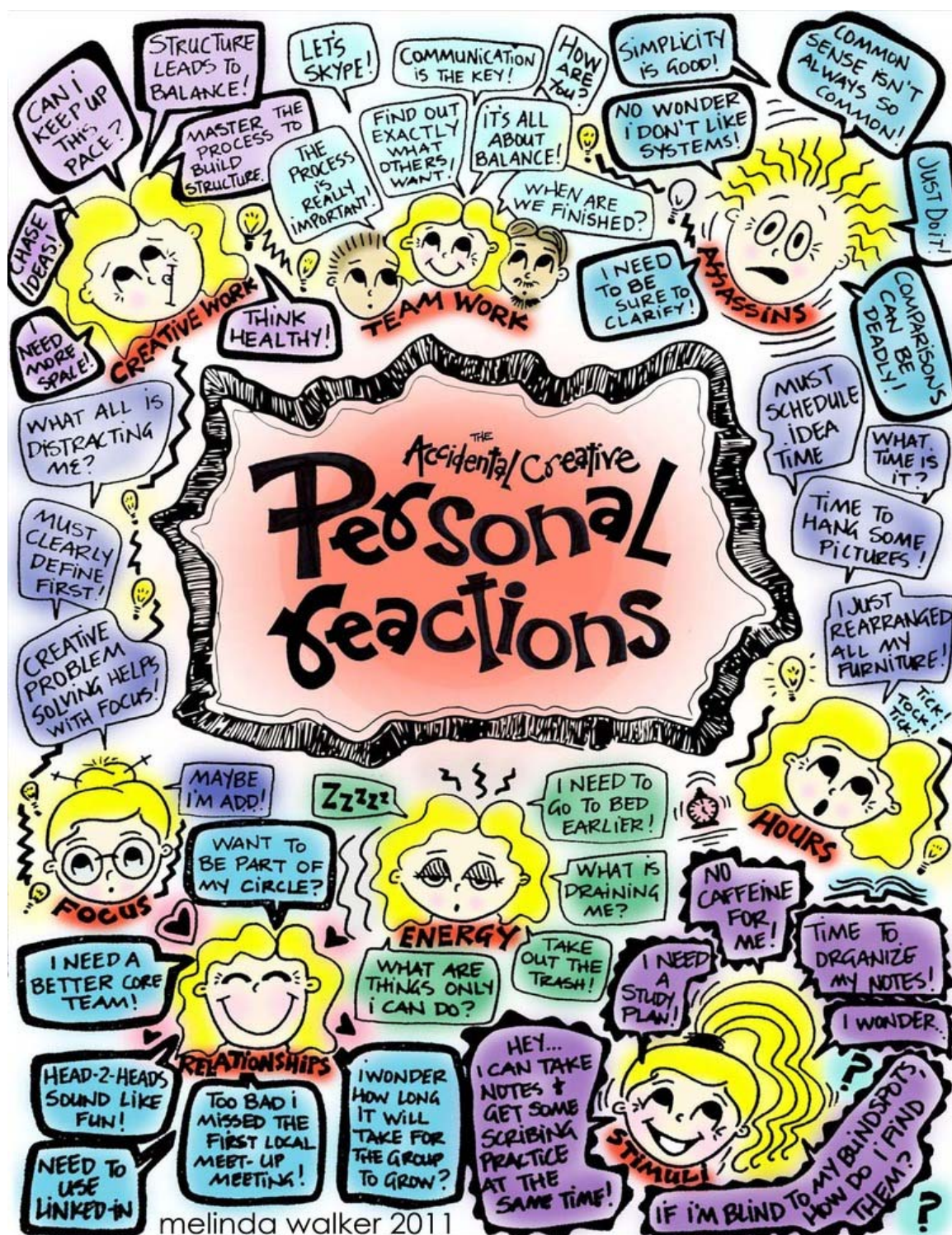


Figure 7. Personal Reactions to *The Accidental Creative*, by Todd Henry.

International Forum of Visual Practitioners

The International Forum of Visual Practitioners (IFVP) is a community of professionals active and engaged in the field of visual thinking. Workshops by prominent experts in the field are a key feature of the annual IFVP conference, and the event is ripe for networking. Due to financial reasons, it seems unlikely I will be able to attend the conference this year, however this is definitely a group to get involved with in whatever capacity I can and an event to attend whenever possible.

Lynn Kearny

Lynn Kearny is another accomplished TCS classmate. I have learned much from her comments on the community mentorship calls, as well as the work she has posted and her comments about it. She has written several books about organizations and graphic presentations and is also a founding member of IFVP. She lives fairly close by, so I am hopeful we can meet in person at some point.

Merkley, C. L. (n.d.). *So you want to be a graphic recorder/facilitator?.* Make your mark graphic facilitation: Using the power of visual thinking to move groups and individuals forward. http://www.makemark.com/articles/so_you_want_to_be_a_graphic_recorder_facilitator

This blog article offers comprehensive yet concise descriptions and explanations of the most commonly asked questions about graphic facilitation and recording. These are questions potential clients are likely to have, so it is very helpful to see how a professional explains the profession and benefits of her service. This article also offers advice for those looking to get into the field. After reading about the types of working situations, necessary skills, and salary information, I realized this may be

the ideal career for me and something I needed to investigate further.

Puccio, G. J., Murdock, M. C. & Mance, M. (2007). *Creative leadership: Skills that drive change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc.

I have come to appreciate this book more and more every time I look at it. I did not realize how heavily many of the CPS tools, and even the CPS process itself, rely on visual thinking, including that in our mind's eye. And interestingly enough, I find it increasingly difficult to look at this book without seeing myself in Buffalo, either walking through the steps in class with ICSC professors, or working through them on my own in my dark little dorm room. Either way, it is a powerful reminder of the role visuals, including those in our mind's eye, play in making abstract concepts concrete and memorable, as well as the role of group experiences.

David Sibbet

Not only a current practicing professional, David Sibbet is a pioneer in the field of visual thinking. Founder of The Grove, one of the very first visual consulting and training companies, he has published a number of resources related to graphic facilitation, group graphics, and general facilitation practices. In addition to his company website (grove.com), his personal site (davidsibbet.com) is rich with further resources, tips, and information related to visual thinking and facilitation. With such a prolific and innovative career, there is no doubt much to learn from this man.

General Bibliography

Arnheim, R. (1971). *Entropy and art: An essay on disorder and order*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Arnheim, R. (1974). *Art and visual perception: A psychology of the creative eye*

- (*The new version*). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Arnheim, R. (1988). *The power of the center: A study of composition in the visual arts*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of seeing*. London, England: Penguin Group.
- Berger, J. (1985). *The sense of sight*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Bronowski, J. (1985). *The visionary eye: Essays in the arts, literature, and science*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Burnett, R. (2004). *How images think*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Fries, A. (2009). *Daydreams at work: Wake up your creative powers*. Sterling, VA: Capital Books, Inc.
- Fritz, R. (1991). *Creating: A guide to the creative process*. New York, NY: Fawcett Columbine.
- Gardner, H. (1982). *Art, mind, & brain: A cognitive approach to creativity*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Gelb, M. J. (1998). *How to think like Leonardo da Vinci: Seven steps to genius every day*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.
- Goleman, D. (1994). *Emotional Intelligence: Why it matters more than IQ*. New York, NY: Bantom Books.
- Goleman, D. (2006). *Social intelligence: The revolutionary new science of human relationships*. New York, NY: Bantom Books.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Heath, C. & Heath, D. (2007). *Made to stick: Why some ideas survive and others die*.

New York, NY: Random House.

Hoffman, D. D. (1998). *Visual intelligence: How we create what we see*. New York, NY:

W. W. Norton & Company.

Kearny, L. (1996). *Graphics for presenters: How to draw your message, even if you can't*

draw. Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications, Inc.

Lee, J. (2011). *The right-brain business plan: A creative, visual map for success*. Novato,

CA: New World Library.

Livingstone, M. (2002). *Vision and art: The biology of seeing*. New York, NY: Harry N

Abrams, Inc.

Malamed, C. (2009). *Visual language for designers: Principles for creating graphics that*

people understand. Beverley, MA: Rockport Publishers.

Maxwell, J.C. (2007). *The 21 irrefutable laws of leadership: Follow them and people will*

follow you. Nashvills, TN: Thomas Nelson.

May, R. (1985). *My quest for beauty*. Dallas, TX: Saybrook Publishing Company.

McKim, R. H. (1980). *Experiences in visual thinking, second edition*. Belmont, CA:

Wadsworth, Inc.

Medina, J. (2008). *Brain rules: 12 principles for surviving and thriving at work, home,*

and school. Seattle, WA: Pear Press.

Margulies, N. (2002). *Mapping inner space: Learning and teaching visual mapping*.

Tuscon, AZ: Zephyr Press.

Meier, D. (2000). *The accelerated learning handbook*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Michalko, M (2001). *Cracking creativity: The secrets of creative genius*. Berkeley, CA:

Ten Speed Press.

- Osborn, A.F. (1963). *Applied imagination: Principles and procedures of creative problem- solving (3rd revised edition)*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Parnes, S. J. (1992). *Visionizing: State-of-the-art process for encouraging innovative excellence*. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation Press.
- Pink, D. H. (2005). *A whole new mind: Why right-brainers will rule the future*. New York, NY: Riverhead books.
- Restak, R. (2006). *The naked brain: How emerging neuroscience is changing how we live, work, and love*. New York, NY: Harmony Books.
- Roam, D. (2009). *The back of the napkin: Solving problem and selling ideas with pictures (expanded edition)*. New York, NY: The Penguin Group.
- Samuels, M. & Samuels, N. (1975). *Seeing with the mind's eye: The history, techniques and uses of visualization*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Schwarz, R. (2002). *The skilled facilitator, new and revised: A comprehensive resource for consultants, facilitators, managers, trainers, and coaches*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- Sibbet, D. (2010). *Visual meetings: How graphics, sticky notes, & idea mapping can transform group productivity*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Siler, T. (1996). *Think like a genius: The ultimate user's manual for your brain*. New York, NY: Bantom Books.
- Simmons, A. (2001). *The story factor: Inspiration, influence, and persuasion through the art of storytelling*. New York, NY: Perseus Books Group.
- Sonneman, M. R. (1997). *Beyond words: A guide to drawing out ideas*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Sternberg, R.J. (1996). *Successful intelligence: How practical and creative intelligence determine success in life*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Wenger, W. (1981). Creative creativity: Some strategies for developing specific areas of the brain and for working both sides together. In Parnes, S.J. (Ed.) *Sourcebook for Creative Problem Solving*. P. 254-262. Amherst, MA: Creative Education Foundation Press.

Wenger, W. (1996). *The Einstein factor: A proven new method for increasing your intelligence*. Roseville, CA: Prima Publishing.

Wheatley, M. J. (2006). *Leadership and the new science: Discovering order in a chaotic world*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Willingham, D. T. (2009). *Why don't students like school?* San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Section Three

Goals and Outcomes

The goal of this project is to deepen my understanding of the work of visual practitioners, further develop my visual thinking skills, and identify a series of action steps that will lead me to become a creatively contagious visual practitioner.

These goals will partly be achieved through the completion of an online graphic facilitation class (thatcreativespace.com). That Creative Space (TCS) is a work-at-your-own-pace course that I have yet to begin. One module is posted every two weeks and, because the course is still being developed, I am limited to working on the current module posted and cannot work beyond that module in advance. However, the instructors were most gracious to give me a tentative outline of the twelve modules with scheduled

posting dates. Because the last three modules will be posted after project due dates, my work will focus on the first nine modules for this project, and the remaining three will be completed as they are posted.

After completion of each module, I will reflect on the following two questions: How might I develop more expertise in this skill? What might be all the steps I can take to lead me closer to becoming a professional visual practitioner? The results of my reflections will be recorded on post-its and kept in a notebook. The notebook will have separate sections for thoughts and ideas related to skill development, professional development, and people to contact or work to study. Each week, I will choose at least one action step to further skill development and at least one that will lead me closer to becoming a professional visual practitioner. The flexibility of the post-its will allow me to remove the chosen action steps from the notebook and stick them in a prominent area of my workspace to keep them forefront in my mind. Once completed, I will place the post-its in the back of the notebook to serve as a visual reminder of what I have achieved.

Some weeks, several small steps may be taken, while one big step may be taken other weeks. Some possible skill related action steps may include finding places to practice, drawing practice, practice with Youtube videos or podcasts, creating samples of various ways to present information graphically (poster, list, cluster, grid, diagram, drawing, mandala), creating an icon card deck, completing exercises suggested in books, etc. Some possible employment related action steps may include contacting practicing professionals in my area, meeting with professional visual practitioners, shadowing a professional visual practitioner, updating my resume, developing my LinkedIn profile, developing a business name for myself, creating a logo, getting business cards, putting together a

portfolio, studying professional visual practitioners websites, etc. Since the action steps are meant to deepen and expand the content in TCS modules, action steps will be chosen after completion of each module to better focus my energy and avoid going in too many directions at once. All work from the modules and extended practice will be posted to a blog (format permitting) for easy reference throughout the project and beyond.

At the end of the nine modules, I will examine all ideas generated for both questions. Taking into account what action steps were completed, I will discard any ideas that are redundant, irrelevant, or no longer applicable. The remaining ideas will be organized and prioritized into a variety of action steps to keep me energized and moving towards employment as a professional visual practitioner. Having an idea system in place ensures I will always have action steps to take to keep me moving toward securing income as a visual practitioner and a system to keep track of ideas when inspiration strikes.

Project Timeline

January 23 – February 5

Make title page for blog delineating master's project work

Begin skype calls with sounding board partner

February 6 – 12

Module 0 "Get Ready"

Module 1 "What is that creative space?"

Final revisions of concept paper

February 13 – 19

Module 2 "Valued Facilitation Partner"

Modules 3 "Your Personal Style

February 20 – 26

Module 4 “Timeline”

Module 5 “Gameboards/Journey Map”

30 minute personal phone consultation

February 27 – March 4

Catch up with action steps if needed

Organize and structure ideas system

Finish and submit draft of sections 1-3

March 5 – 11

Module 6 “More on Metaphors”

Module 7 “Rapid Ideations/Product Sketching”

March 12 – 18

Module 8 “Synthesis/Info Graphics”

Module 9 “Agenda Design”

March 19 – 25

Work on idea system

Begin draft of sections 4-6

March 26 – April 1

Finish idea system

April 2 – 8

Finishing touches on idea system, if needed

Begin presentation

Finish and submit draft of sections 4-6

April 9 – 15

Continue work on presentation

April 16 – 22

Finalize and submit project

Continue work on presentation

April 23 – 29

Finishing touches on presentation, if needed

April 30 – May 6

Finalize and submit presentation and project

Each of the nine modules includes:

- instructional videos = .5 hour
- hands-on work, including posting to blog = 3 hours
- support call = 1 hour
- looking and commenting on classmates work = 1 hour

Total time for TCS = 49.5 hours (plus maybe 1-2 hours for Module 0)

Additional time beyond each of the nine modules:

- reflection/ideation on both questions = .5
- action step to build skill level = 3 hours
- action step to move toward becoming a professional = 3 hours

Total time beyond each module = 58.5

Additional activities:

- at least two half-hour personal mentoring calls with TCS instructors
- compiling, evaluating, organizing, and designing idea system = 10 hours
- documenting action steps (18 action steps, 15 minutes each) = 4.5 hours)
- finalizing concept paper = 3.5 hours
- draft sections 1-3 = 3 hours
- draft sections 4-6 = 6 hours
- writing and revision of final report = 10 hours
- skype calls with sounding board partner = 15 hours

Total time for additional activities = 52 hours

Total estimated time for project = 160 hours (plus maybe 1-2 hours for Module 0)

Section Four

What Will be the Tangible Product(s) or Outcomes?

The outcomes of this project will be a minimum of nine graphic illustrations or recordings, one from each of the nine TCS modules, posted to a private blog for easy access throughout the project and beyond. At least nine graphic illustrations or recordings from my extended skill practice will also be posted to this blog. This will allow me to visually track my progress and share my work with my advisor and sounding board partner. Part of the extended practice will include graphic recording of skype conversations with my sounding board partner. Extended skill practice may also include graphic illustrations and templates for some of my cohort members to use either professionally or as part of their projects. Other possibilities for extended practice may include creating a set of graphic icon cards, completing drawing exercises in books,

template creation, and practice from podcasts and youtube videos. If appropriate, results of actions steps leading to professional development will also be posted to this blog. Such steps may include the creation of a logo, business card design, or graphic recordings of discussions with professionals. Posting my work in this way will also allow me to easily share my work with others for feedback, if the opportunity arises. Since development of a professional blog may be one future action step, documenting my work in this way will also provide experience in maintaining a blog.

In addition to the blog, this project will result in an idea system consisting of a notebook full of post-it notes with thoughts and ideas related to visual thinking and my future as a visual practitioner. This idea system will serve as a tangible way to organize my thoughts, ideas, and potential action steps to keep me energized and moving forward. Action steps already taken and the results of them, along with evaluations, and any other pertinent information will also be included. If the results of an action step are not applicable to the blog, they will be included in the idea system or presented in the most appropriate manner. Also included will be a series of future action steps to be taken after the duration of this project to ensure the momentum built during the project is maintained well beyond.

Section Five

Personal Learning Goals

1. To develop expert skills, deeper knowledge, and experience with visual thinking to secure professional work as a visual practitioner
2. To identify my strengths and weaknesses as a future visual practitioner for skill development, assessment of gaps, and marketing my expertise.

3. To explore the demand of visual practitioners in my area and the depth of my enjoyment in graphic illustration, recording and facilitation.
4. To create an idea system to organize my ideas, steps, and outcomes regarding my future as a visual practitioner that will keep me energized, excited, and moving forward on my way to becoming a professional.
5. To create a sharper vision of my future as a visual practitioner, creativity expert and creatively contagious person

What Criteria Will You Use To Measure The Effectiveness Of Your Achievement?

The assignments included in each module will provide a set of objectives. If my work for that module meets the objectives, then I know my efforts have succeeded. If not, I know what areas need more practice. The degree of improvement will be visible when looking at the body of work posted on my blog. Ideally, this would result in a large enough body of high quality work to create a professional portfolio. Completion of the modules and additional action steps will result in increased confidence, enthusiasm, and energy around this type of work, as well as a clearer direction as to where my strengths lie and feasible action steps to lead me closer to becoming a professional visual practitioner. To this end, the criteria I will be held accountable for includes a minimum of 20 graphic images posted to my blog, consisting of work that is highly original, clearly presented, and elegant.

Evaluation

Included in my ideas system will be a section for feedback from classmates and instructors of TCS, as well as any other feedback received on my work, including my own. Ideally, I would like to receive feedback from a variety of sources beyond those

involved with TCS, including some live practice sessions, however I realize this may not be possible in the timeframe of this project. If outside feedback is elusive, I will turn to the Supremes, family, and friends. Susan Besemer's Creative Product Analysis Model (2006) will be the basis of my own evaluations, as well as by those outside TCS, and will consist of the following questions:

1. Is the image well-crafted?
2. Does the image look whole and complete or are there elements that look like they do not belong?
3. Is the image elegant and refined?
4. Is the image understandable?
5. Is the image useful?
6. Does the image fill a need?
7. Is the image logical?
8. Does the image include an element of surprise, irony, or humor?
9. Is the image unique and original?

This will provide a consistent, concise, articulate framework to ensure all aspects of my work are considered, going beyond the initial visual impression and avoiding artistic critique. After taking into consideration all of the feedback amassed in regard to my work, I will be better able to determine if I have enough quality work to create a professional portfolio, or an idea of how much more and what type of work is needed. This feedback is sure to generate more ideas to be included in my idea system, to strengthen both my skills and professional presence.

In addition to my work, I will evaluate my confidence, enthusiasm, and energy level regarding this type of work, my idea system, and my proposed action steps with the following questions:

1. Do I look forward to creating visual work?
2. Do I experience a sense of flow or does time seem to drag while I am working?
3. Am I easily distracted while working?
4. Can I discuss visual thinking and the work of visual practitioners with ease?
5. Am I eager or hesitant to share my work with others?
6. Am I content with what I draw the first time or do I feel the need to continually start over?

If confidence, enthusiasm, and/or energy are lagging in any of the three areas in regard to any proposed action steps, I will further evaluate if this is due to that particular step simply leading me out of my comfort zone in a productive manner, or if it is leading me in a direction that would not ultimately be ideal. If it is moving me in the wrong direction, I will simply discard it and move on to the next step.

References

- Bessemer, S. P. (2006). *Creating products in the age of design: How to improve your new product ideas!*. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press, Inc.
- Durand, D. & Durand, P. (2011). *That Creative Space*. Thatcreativespace.com
- Khatena, J. (1984). *Imagery & creative imagination*. Buffalo, NY: Bearly Unlimited.
- Torrance, E. P. & Safter, H. T. (1999). *Making the creative leap beyond...* Buffalo, NY: The Creative Education Foundation.

APPENDIX B

The Accidental Creative



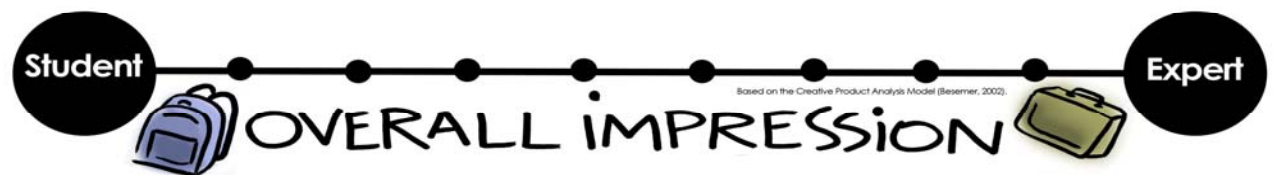
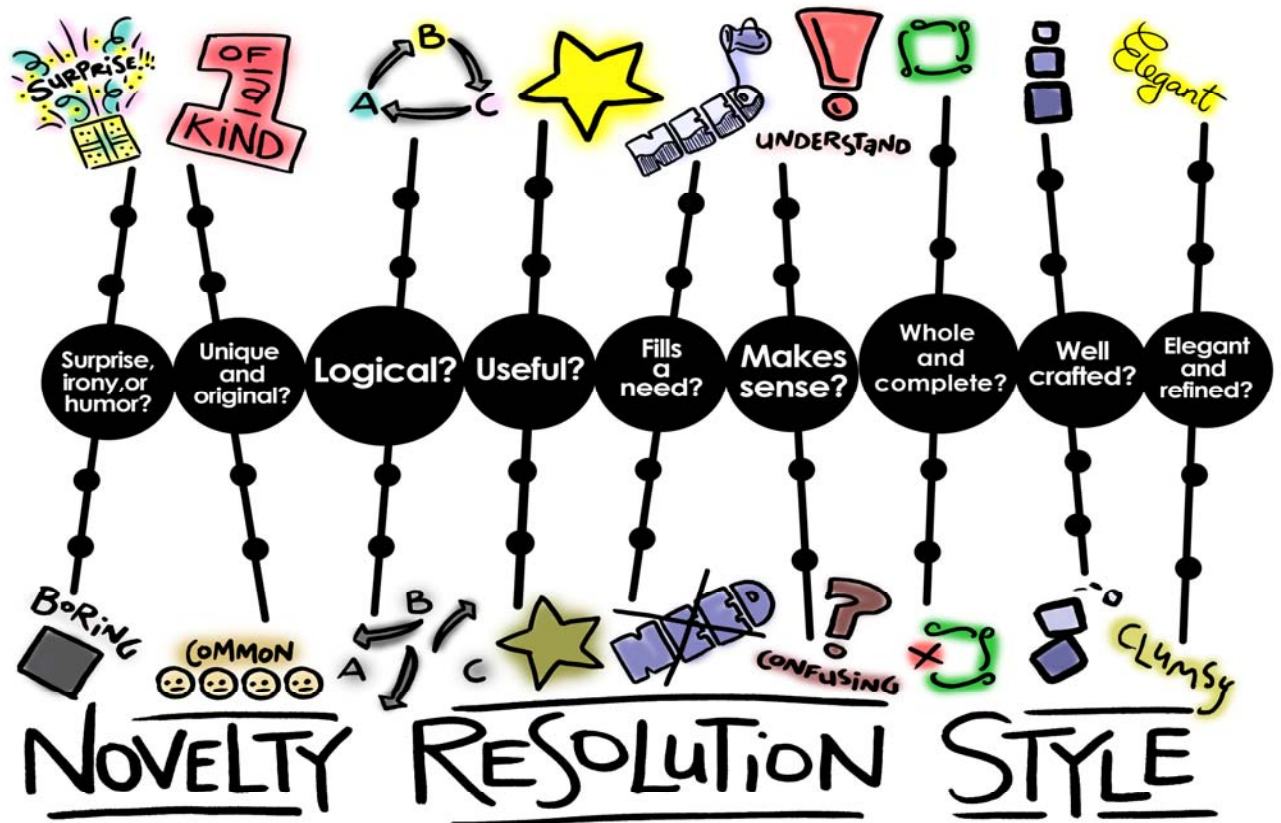




APPENDIX C

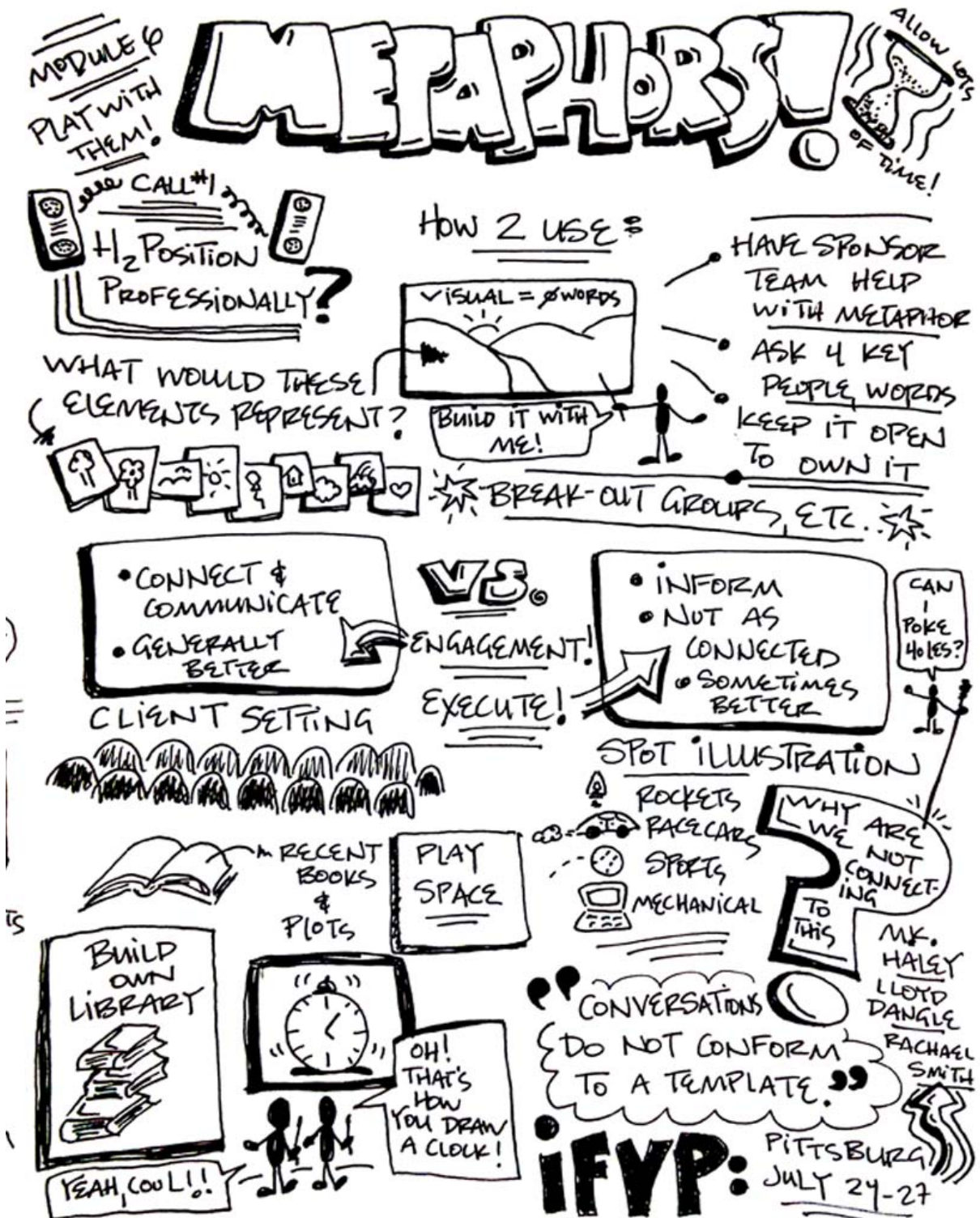
Evaluation Form Based on Besemer's Creative Product Analysis

EVALUATION!



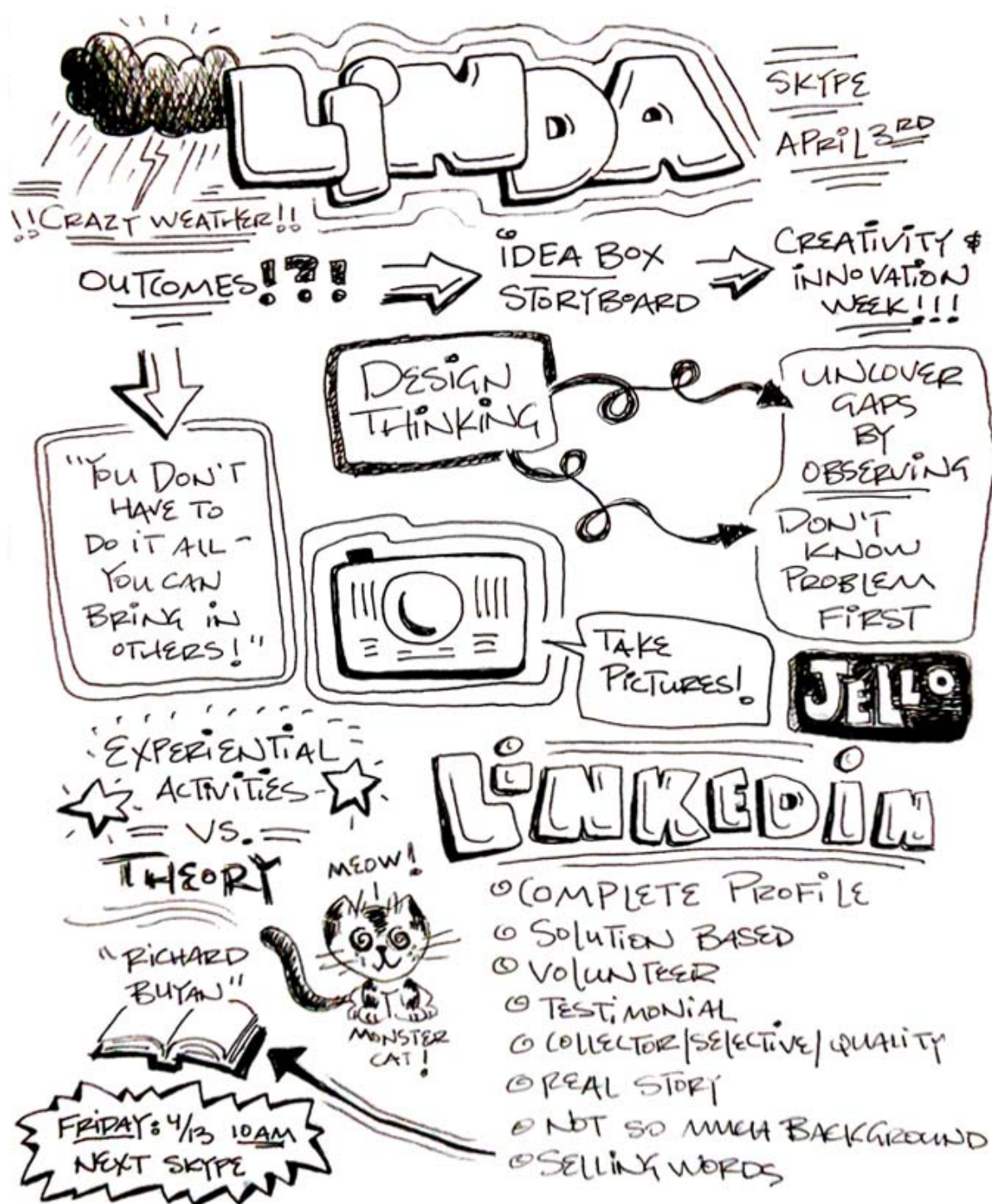
APPENDIX D

Sketchnotes from TCS Module Six Community Mentorship Call



APPENDIX E

Sketchnotes from Skype Chats





APPENDIX F

Worksheet Created in Credential Program

Mystery Doodles

CREATED BY MELINDA WALKER

WHAT YOU NEED:

- PENCIL OR PEN
- × PAPER
- A PARTNER
- × IMAGINATION

WHAT YOU DO:

- THINK OF A MATH EQUATION.
- × CREATE A DOODLE USING ALL PARTS OF THE EQUATION.
- PARTNER TRIES TO "READ" YOUR EQUATION.



SNOWMAN
1, 3, 10



FLOWER
 $3+7=10$



SPIDER
 $7-7+7-7=0$



CATERPILLAR
1, 3, 7, 8

RULES:

- ALL PARTS OF YOUR EQUATION MUST BE USED.
- × ONLY PARTS OF YOUR EQUATION MAY BE USED.
- (IF YOU THROW A 5 INTO YOUR DOODLE FOR THE EQUATION $2+2=4$, YOU MUST ADD A 5 TO THE EQUATION AS WELL.)

× EQUATION PARTS MAY BE USED AS MANY TIMES AS NEEDED.

- ALL EQUATIONS MUST BE CORRECT!

× SEE BOX FOR VARIATIONS

USE ONLY NUMBERS TO MAKE IT EASIER.
COMBINE SEVERAL TO CREATE A PICTURE.
USE ONLY ODD OR EVEN NUMBERS.
TELL PARTNER WHAT NUMBERS TO USE.

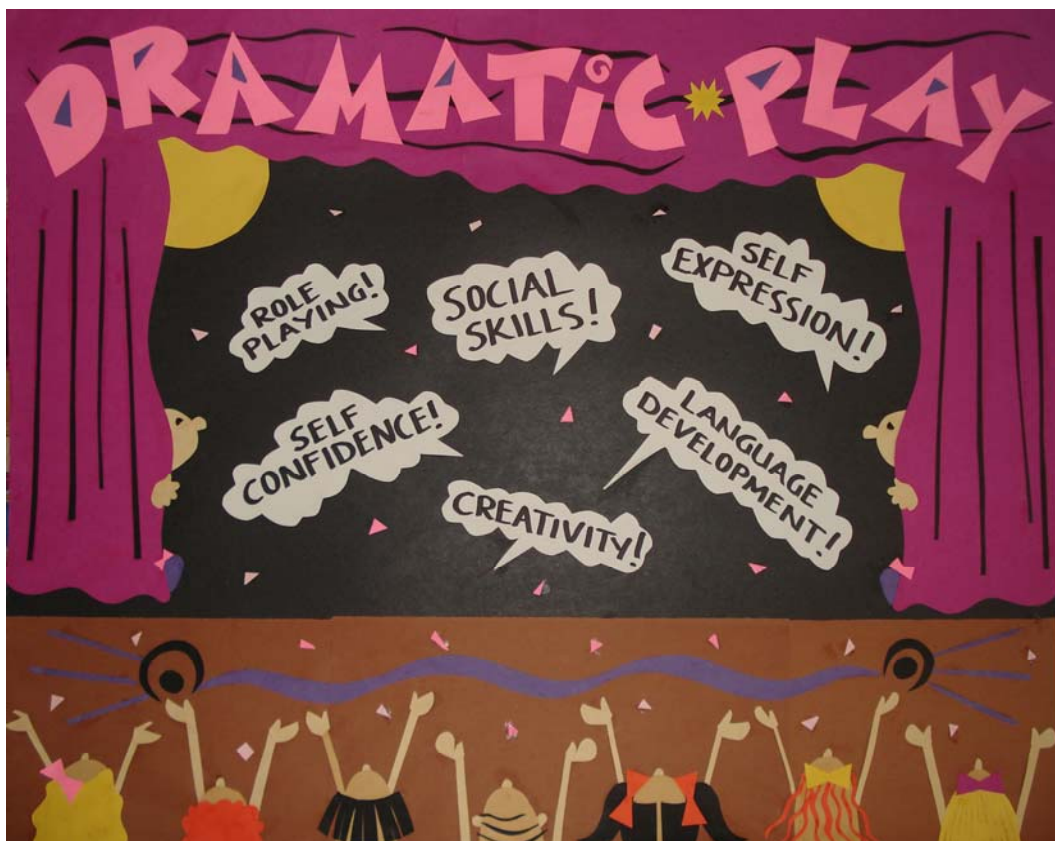
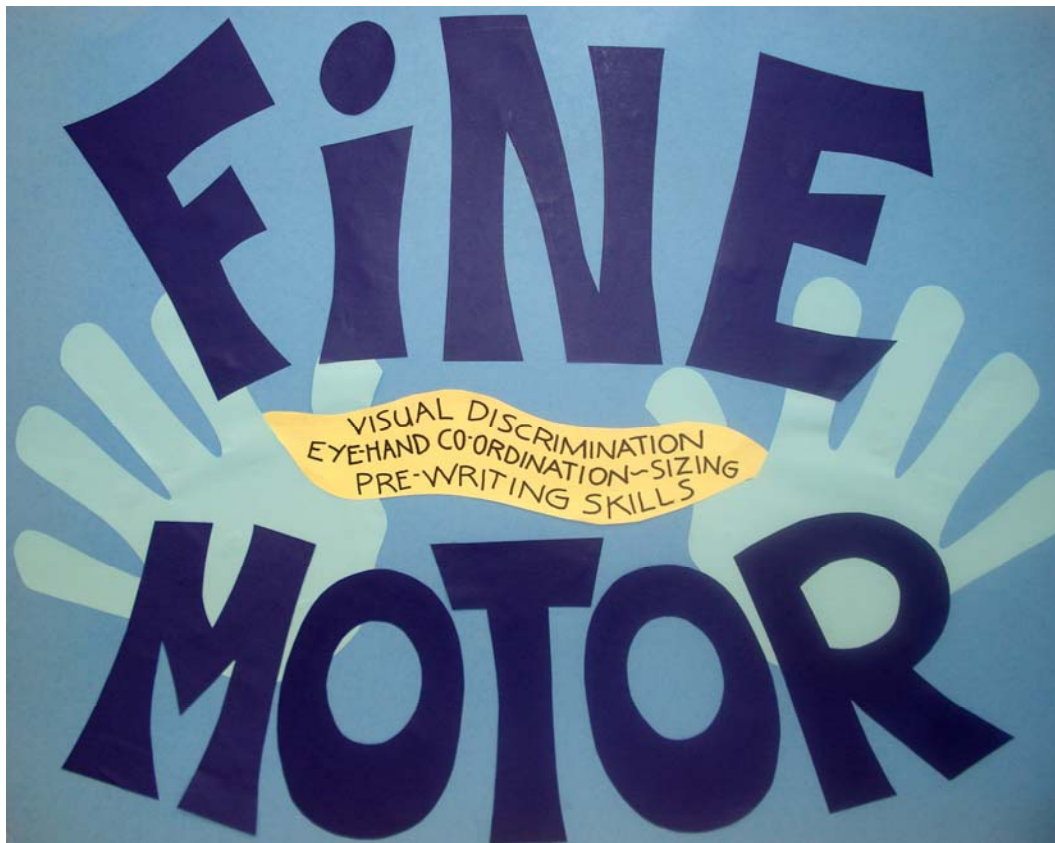


BUTTERFLY
 $3-3=0$

APPENDIX G

Signs for Preschool Activity Night – Created in 2008





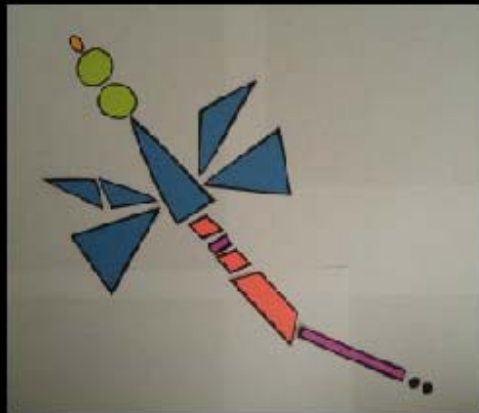
APPENDIX H

Educational Visuals Created for CRS 580



The Creative Learning Assessment Framework

provides educators with a clear but open structure for observing, reflecting, and commenting on student progress in creative learning situations. Although originally developed with the elementary art classroom in mind, it is highly adaptable to pretty much any age group, subject, or skill level.



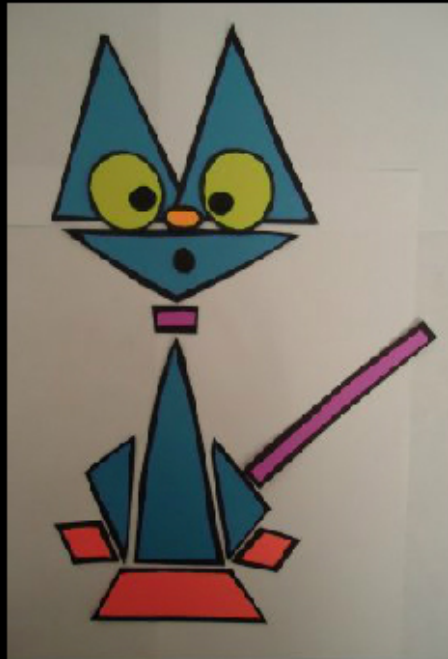
Albert Einstein once said to,

“Make things as simple as possible but no simpler.”

The CLA Framework has done just that. Consisting of 12 specific attributes, arranged in 6 little groups, the CLA framework is certainly simple, yet far from simplistic. It brings to light each child's strengths and areas in need of improvement.

Although each child is assessed in the **exact same way**, the results are as unique as the students themselves.

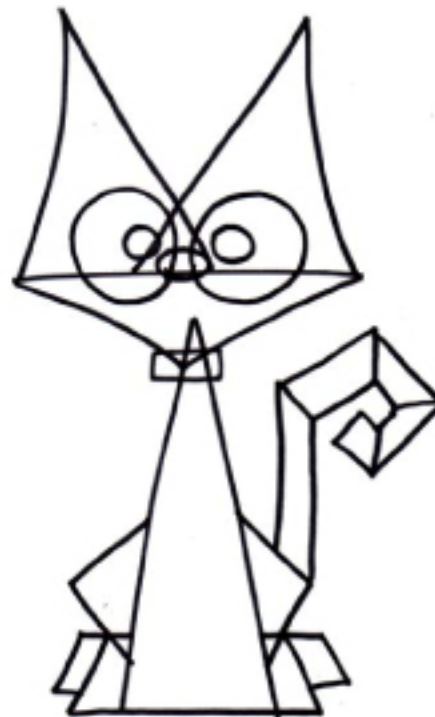
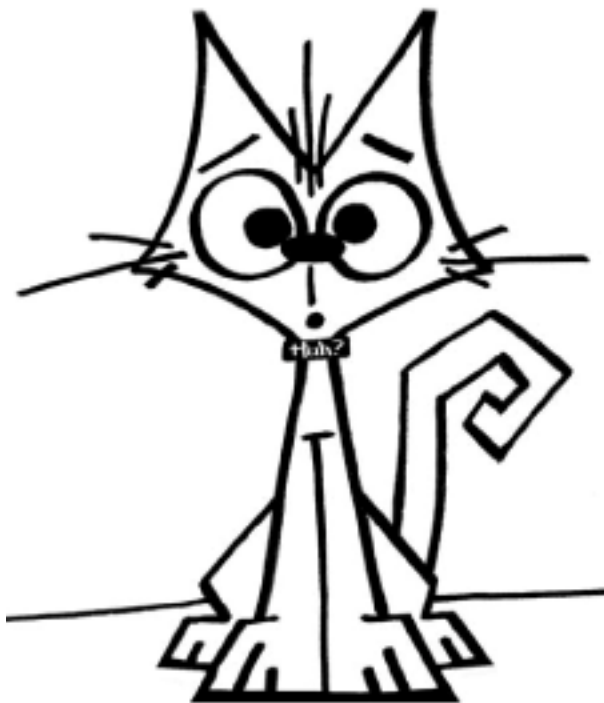
The CLA makes it clear the components of the framework create **a different picture** for each student, just as the shapes on the previous slides created a different picture than the one seen here.



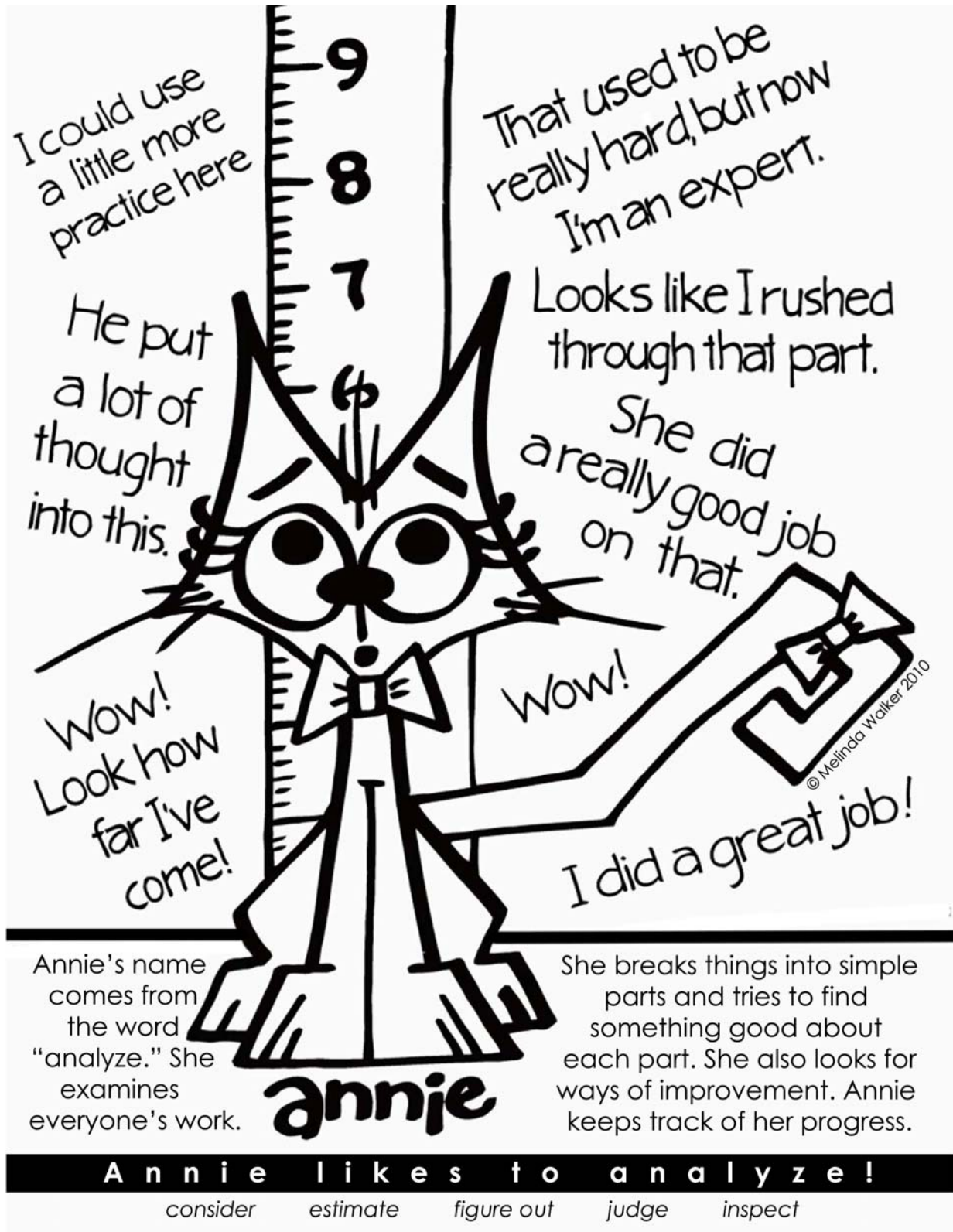
The cats on the following slides were created from these basic shapes, and can easily be drawn by kids.

The following slides contain hand-outs and/or posters to make the 12 key components of the CLA framework **assessable to kids**.

By prominently displaying and discussing components of creative learning, students know **what is expected** of them and have more control of their learning experiences.







APPENDIX I

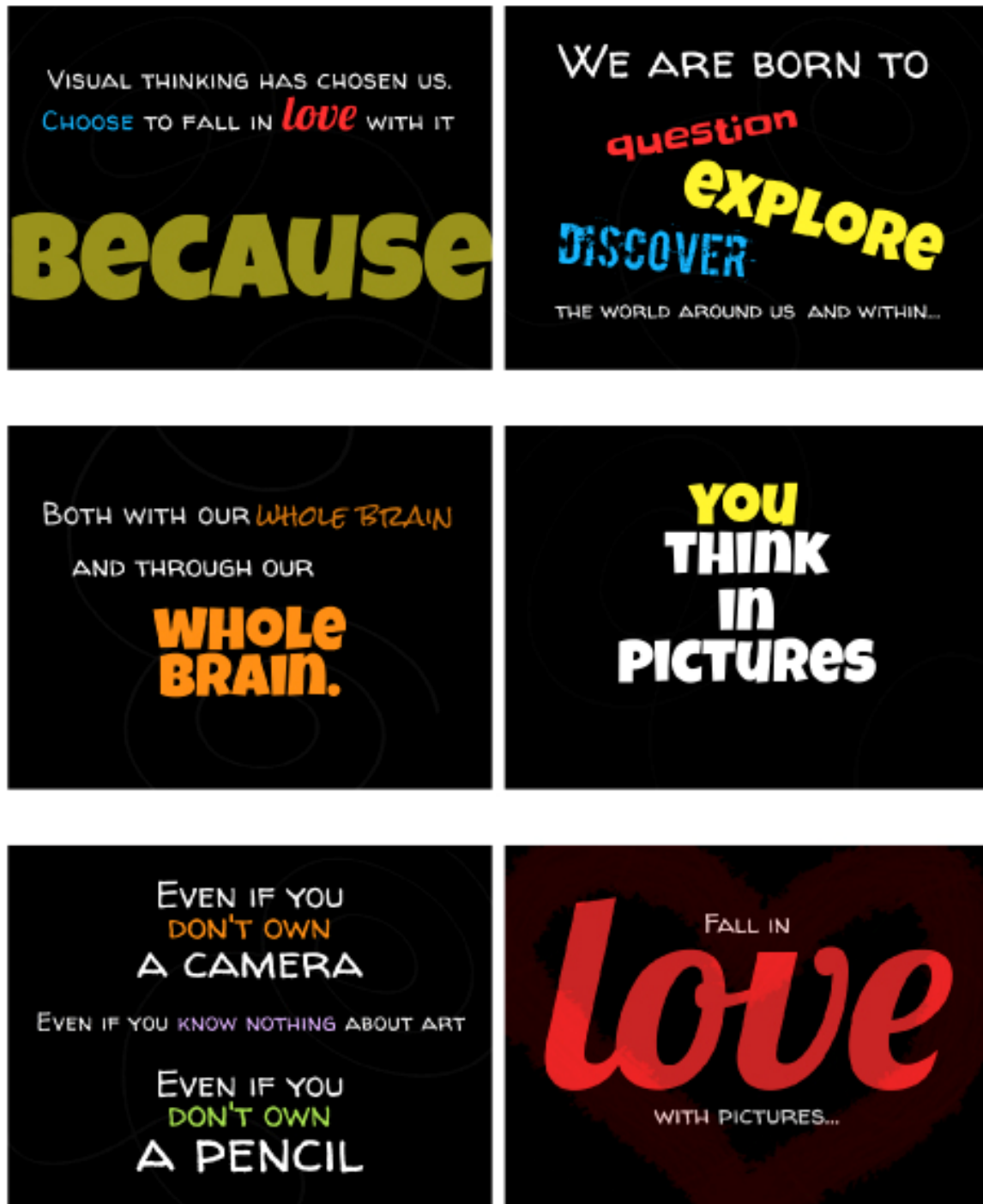
Slides for Introduction to Visual Thinking Animation













APPENDIX J

Slides for Ambiguity and Visual Thinking Animation



